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MY MARRIED LIFE WITH LUDENDORFF

BY

MARGARETHE LUDENDORFF

Translated from the German

BY

RAGLAN SOMERSET

WITH FRONTISPIECE
AND 8 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is essentially a woman's book. She has written it for itself and with no ulterior object. A charming woman with all a woman's feelings, tells us what she observed in times of stress from her high vantage ground, and how she saw it. Her tale is told without fear or favour ; with taste and tact, and always with a historian's impartiality.

Frau Ludendorff does not desire to trace the lines of great events, introducing a new curve here and rounding off a corner there : like a true woman she prefers instead of merely describing events and personalities, to give us their surroundings and significance. She does not write history, but historical sketches which I would rather call vignettes. She lets people speak and gives us just what fell from their lips, giving thereby a clearer and more life-like form to her characters than if she had subjected them to a long psychological analysis. In vivid pictures she lets the reader see episodes and situations which seem to live before his eyes.

She uses her eyes and ears well, she under-

stands the value of half-tones and offers us much of interest and importance. Her narrative never fails to stimulate and enthrall : her success will be greatest with those who can read between the lines.

The time and circumstances from which Frau Ludendorff drew her materials, and her position as wife of the all-powerful husband, at whom the whole world gazed, lend a particular cachet to her book. Many of its stories have a breathless interest.

Who can help being interested in the special train in which Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the future victors of Tannenberg, were borne eastwards ? Or in the story of how she got the news of her husband's exploits at Liége and in the East.

Who can remain unmoved by their meetings in the various theatres of war ? The episode of Frau Ludendorff and Erzberger speaks volumes. And then there is the story of all that went on in Ludendorff's house both when the Kapp and Hitler plots were being hatched and after those movements had failed. The authoress will also have the sympathy of every German mother when she tells of those two sons of hers, whose sacrifice the Fatherland required.

These are perhaps, from a purely human standpoint, the salient features of a book which,

owing to the blows struck by Fate at its authoress, has, in general, a profoundly human interest. There broods over so many chapters a quiet resignation which, by its very simplicity, grips the reader.

On the other hand, there are many episodes and situations which are remarkable for their real humour. It is a proof both of the balance and humanity of the authoress, that even in most serious times she can see and depict the lighter side of things. Still more, even in the most important people she can discover amusing qualities and, while preserving all due respect, she is not afraid to laugh and make her readers laugh with her. One word more as to her tale of her own relations with the General : it is a satisfactory feature of the work and renders it peculiarly valuable, that in this respect the authoress avoids all bitterness, although she is a wife writing of a husband who is hers no longer. We are thus in the presence of a work which takes a foremost place in the literary memoirs of the World-War because it offers so much on its human side to the reader and has been written with unflinching taste.

WALTER ZIERSCH.

MUNICH, *January* 1929.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

ALTHOUGH during the last few years I have often been urged to write and publish my memoirs, I have persistently refused.

It is chiefly for the sake of my children that I have at length yielded and to them I dedicate this book. My life has been full of bright colours and important events. It seems worth while composing a lasting record of the swift rhythm and boisterous melody of my days. It has been a life full of glad fulfilment and painful renunciations. I was allowed to taste the pleasures of this world, but I was also destined to tread the path of deep affliction right to the bitter end. Until at last I schooled myself to resignation.

When I look back, what a wealth of great incidents ! What turns of fortune !

I think of the time before the war when the great nations in their might strove for the leadership of the Continent and when England as the basis of her colonial policy wished to assure herself the unchecked mastery of the seas.

Then came the World-War and revolution. At

Ludendorff's side I knew the loftiest heights, the lowest depths. I was often allowed a peep behind the wings of the world's stage and a glimpse of the secret combinations and entanglements which went on there.

The prominent men of that time crossed my path. Princes and generals, statesmen and politicians, artists, scholars and leading industrials—somewhere or sometime I met them all. With many I formed ties of closest friendship. My reminiscences begin with my marriage to Ludendorff. It may seem strange that I have selected this starting point since the bond between us is now severed. But our common experience of great achievement and grave disaster has linked us so strongly and so inseparably together, in the very warp and woof of our lives, that, come what may, we can never quite be sundered.

In my memoirs I shall relate only what lives clearly and plainly in my memory.

What I saw and heard and how I saw and heard it, shall be here, in its natural sequence, given to the reader.

MARGARETHE LUDENDORFF.

MY MARRIED LIFE WITH LUDENDORFF

CHAPTER I

IT was in August 1909 that I became the wife of Erich Ludendorff who was then a major on the Great General Staff. It was a marriage of deep affection on both sides.

He was my second husband, my three boys Franz, Heinz and Erich and my daughter Margot being the children of my first marriage.

From the beginning my children had a warm liking for their new father and this in the course of the war deepened into love and admiration.

My mother was already dead, and soon afterwards I lost my father. I saw my sister, who was my only near relation, very seldom. My brother-in-law was in the Navy and they lived at Kiel, whereas except for short holidays I never left Berlin.

And now, through my husband, I was again to belong to a family which included a mother and three married sisters. In addition, Heaven

in a night bestowed upon me seven elderly aunts between sixty and seventy years old and nearly all unmarried. I passed some terribly anxious moments on their account. Just imagine what it was like after having had for thirty years an auntless existence, quite suddenly to be blessed with seven, and exposed where possible to their microscopic scrutiny.

My future husband and my friends endeavoured to console me. There was, they said, nothing prim or old-maidish about them. They were sound, vigorous and kind-hearted people. My answer was a deep sigh. More than once I caught myself trying to learn the aunts' names by heart, "Aunt Anna, Aunt Henny, Aunt Mary, Aunt Nina—and, good heavens, I've forgotten the others.

How would I get on with the family of my future husband?

Our first visit as a newly married couple was paid to Ludendorff's youngest sister and her husband, my worthy brother-in-law, Gustav John. They gave me such a warm welcome that I was able to face the future with less misgivings. And then that first time when we stayed with his dear mother. . . . How groundless had been my fears! I found a lady of such charm and distinction that she took my heart by storm. I was

devoted to her until her death and still think of her with gratitude. She left us all too soon. If only she had lived, my husband's path and mine would never have been sundered. And now for these seven dear aunts of mine. From them too I got the warmest welcome. They would have taken me to their arms if I had been the biggest monster in the world, because my husband was their obvious favourite—the idol at whom they gazed with fanatical adoration. Such simple kindly old ladies I had never met before. Aunt Nina, a gentle little creature, was the one most at the mercy of her moods. Every evening she spread out before her her usual games of patience. If they came out quickly and easily they gave her no pleasure. But, woe betide them, if they refused to come out at all. She would pick the cards up in a towering rage and hurl them against the wall. Only one of the aunts was a little touchy and hard to please. If we saw her sitting stern and bolt upright in her place, we used to say, "Aunt is sitting on the sofa and has taken offence at something."

With my husband's sisters, I am still on terms of the warmest friendship and long may it continue.

CHAPTER II

IN the second section of the Great General Staff, the operations section, to which Ludendorff was attached and of which he later became the chief, there reigned a strong esprit de corps. Anyone who belonged to the "Second" was the object of envy quite apart from the fact that it stood for the blue ribbon of military distinction.

In it there were no cliques or petty jealousies, but a group of remarkable people brought together by a fortunate chance : its officers were men of high capacity, sincere convictions and distinguished appearance, their young wives were dowered with beauty, charm and talent. My closest friend among them was Countess Recke Vollmerstein. This was only to be expected as she had three sons who were all cadets of the same age as my own and, like the Countess and myself, our children became friends.

The Countess was a model wife and mother. She made a great impression on me. "I can turn my hand to anything," she used to say and it was no mere figure of speech. Her music was

as good as her cooking and she liked dancing as much as the scientific lectures which she regularly attended.

On one of my visits I found her at her laundry taking the place of a maid who was ill. "Do you see," she said with a smile, "we country-bred folk are educated a bit more sensibly in practical things, than you spoilt children of the town."

Frau von Voss, then in her first youth, was one of the loveliest visions I ever saw. She was like an old English picture which had stepped out of its frame.

Both these women alas ! who meant so much to me were cut off in their prime.

My husband's position involved a formidable mass of work. Every afternoon at five o'clock an orderly appeared with a bulging despatch case. The husbands awaited it with impatience, the wives endured it as an inevitable evil. It had to be dealt with outside office hours. In the year 1911, the question was how to get our large Army Estimates accepted by the Ministry of War. We had a hard struggle with von Heeringen, who was then Minister of War and opposed the claims of the General Staff. In this he was strongly supported by one of his departmental chiefs, General Wandel.

Did they really think that the increase in the

army was unnecessary or were they afraid of unpleasant disputes in the Reichstag? The more the General Staff pressed its claims the more the War Ministry resisted them. Our own energy aroused that of our opponents. One day after a stormy meeting Ludendorff came home visibly exhausted. He showed how seriously he regarded the situation. "I have," he said, "to make Moltke stand his ground by gripping him like a vice, otherwise I think his weakness would bring him to utter ruin."

Finally the Estimates were introduced in the Reichstag. After long and important debates two of the Army Corps we demanded were approved. The third was struck out. This was done, they said, to prevent the German debt from growing beyond all bounds. I often heard it said afterwards that if only that third Army Corps had been approved, all our misfortunes would not have come upon us. It was just that one which we needed to fill the gap in our front at the battle of the Marne and prevent the French from breaking through.

But these are but profitless speculations which depress our spirits but can no longer influence the fate of our country.

When the debate on the Army Estimates was over, all those who had opposed and striven by

every means to defeat them received high orders and decorations. Several of them, and amongst others General Wandel, were promoted to the ranks of the nobility. On the other hand, Ludendorff failed to obtain the slightest recognition of his efforts in their defence. In hot haste they gave him a regiment in order to remove his inconvenient presence from Berlin and from the General Staff. He was transferred to Düsseldorf and his influence as an effective force was eliminated. As we were packing up for our journey I came across a black and a white helmet-plume. The black one had been worn by Ludendorff when he was in the Grenadier Guards, while the white one dated from his time on the General Staff. I had the curiosity to ask him which plume he would wear in his new regiment, the black or the white one? With a merry twinkle in his eye, but in a very sarcastic tone, he replied: "My child, you must be quite mad. How long have the line regiments worn a plume?"

I still hear the sound of those laughing careless words. Yes, there was a time when Ludendorff could be cheerful, and free from anxiety. His features did not always wear that look of unbending obstinacy, the expression of a man whose feelings had been turned to ice.

Soon after our arrival in Düsseldorf there was a parade of the garrison which had been reduced by the Corps Commander, General von Einem, who had previously been Minister of War.

Never in my life had I seen cavalry parading on foot in their long cloaks, and I was amazed to see that there were officers with red plumes. A few days before I should unhesitatingly have relegated these Bavarian gunners to the realms of the novelist or the playwright.

I thought with regret of a parade at Potsdam of the Guards' cavalry. What a wonderful sight it was and how unforgettable were those regiments in the gold and silver of their dress uniforms ! The first time after the revolution that I met a small troop of territorials, their band was playing (the first military music I had heard for years) and I am not ashamed to admit that big tears streamed down my cheeks. To think that our proud army had been reduced to these puny remnants.

Pictures like the tattoo before the Royal Palace or the receptions given to foreign Royalty will always live in my memory. They were spectacles of truly imperial splendour and soldierly smartness.

What a contrast was the review which I once attended abroad ! Regiments of real merit, clearly colonial troops, covered with decorations,

took part in it. But the front-line took a zigzag course, and at the command "Attention" there ensued what one can only describe as a quite remarkable confusion. If any of our good Prussian non-commissional officers had seen it, his hair would have stood on end with horror !

It is only fair to say, however, that when the English King and Queen visited Berlin, there were certain unrehearsed incidents of a very unpleasant character.

As the state-coaches drew near the palace the horses in the guard-of-honour shied at the boom of the royal salute. They reared up and caused much confusion. Many riders were unhorsed.

We spectators were horrified. When the Emperor with the King of England reached the palace gates the stately procession behind them had been interrupted. Even the horses of the carriage containing the Empress and the Queen had shied and the escort had tied itself into a knot. In the midst of this confusion the Royalties had to leave the carriage and get into another one. On the terrace of the palace, where a great portion of the Court society had assembled, this event was regarded as an evil omen. Unfortunately these forebodings were only too well justified.

One other festive scene still lives in my memory.

At the age of sixteen I attended my first Opera Ball which, in the days of the Emperor, was the chief event of the winter. In the boxes sat royalties, ministers, diplomats, high officials and military men with their wives and daughters. Not one name that counted in art or science was absent.

It is difficult to describe the splendour of the design. The whole house had been turned into a garden of flowers full of light and colour.

I can never forget that I danced my first set of Lancers before the very eyes of the Emperor and his spouse.

It was at a dance like this that I made the acquaintance of von Stranitz, the former manager of the Royal Theatre. He was a clever, amusing man with flashing eyes and a slender, almost delicate, figure. Countless wrinkles and crows' feet had furrowed his countenance like a fungus. He was then living with his third wife, a former actress with the build of a Valkyrie, who overtopped him by a head.

In the art of light conversation he had no equal. He could lend a touch of grace and distinction to the merest commonplaces, and at parties in my house I have known the young men throng round him and listen to his stories to such an extent that they forgot to dance. "I have now

had three wives," he once confessed to me, "a blonde, a brunette and one with black hair, but up to now there has not been one with red hair." I suggested to him that the winding up of his existing matrimonial affairs should be expedited lest he should be too late for his "Titian blonde." For he was already seventy-five years old.

"If hereafter I reach Heaven," he said in his oracular manner, "God will put his hand on my shoulder—greet me with a smile and say: 'My old friend, you have enjoyed your life and known the real pleasures of my lovely world.'"

Von Stranitz was a type of yesterday and there are very few of his sort left to-day.

When I was quite young my father sought to arouse in me a love of music. I heard my first opera *Mignon* with Lilli Lehmann as Philine, at the age of seven. It was just before the great singer broke her contract with the Royal Opera. When she came back from America I only heard her in concerts, never again on the stage.

I was always an enthusiastic theatre-goer, but I never came into personal contact with any of the actors or actresses of world-renown, with the single exception of Walter Kirchoff.

I made his acquaintance when he had resigned his commission and was studying with Professor Eugen Robert Weiss, a celebrated teacher of

music. He had just been studying the famous aria in *Samson* and sang it three times through in the house of his teacher, each time half a tone higher as though to give a proof of his powers. We were all enthusiastic. When, however, he had become a great artist, he was more sparing in giving us evidence of his mature ability and took care to husband his voice.

When I was still in Berlin, I did not know any poets and writers of importance—with the exception of Oswald Spengler, whose mere knowledge filled me with admiration. It was in Düsseldorf and owing to the war that I first came into touch with creative artists, principally painters and sculptors.

Professors Petersen and Hugo Vogel spent a long time at Headquarters in Lötzen in order to paint the portraits of Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

Professor Vogel wanted my opinion on the big fresco which he had painted for the Town Hall of Hanover. It is a well-known picture: the Field-Marshal is sitting at a table while Ludendorff with his eye-glass in his hand is bending over the huge map which is stretched out on it. Between them we can see a cap of quite respectable proportions. Rumour has it that a lady asked Ludendorff whether the cap belonged to him or

Hindenburg? Ludendorff is said to have replied laconically, "If you are so interested, you had better ask my wife if I have as big a head as that." This little tale is as improbable as it is amusing. Anyone who knows Ludendorff knows that he has not a spark of humour and that he would hardly have been able to think of such a ready quick-witted reply.

When Professor Vogel saw the interest I took in his work he made a copy of this picture for me.

In Lötzen he had painted a whole group of remarkable pictures, one of which made so deep an impression on Frau Hindenburg that he wished to dedicate it to her. A crowd of fugitives is stumbling along a country road. You can see how they are almost fainting under the burden of their miserable belongings. In the background, in the evening twilight, lies the Marienburg.

I happened to speak to Ludendorff about this picture—"Yes," he said, "I know it well, and it certainly has atmosphere, only the fugitives are going in the wrong direction." In the picture, they would certainly reach Russia if they continued.

Like most men of vigorous action, Ludendorff hated sitting for his portrait.

According to the testimony of Professor Vogel,

Hindenburg was always equally pleasant and friendly at the sittings which he gave, whereas Ludendorff, with his stern expression, was often positively alarming. "Your husband," said Vogel, "gives me cold shivers down my back." Even in his family we knew that grim countenance. They used to say, "Be careful! Look out! To-day father looks like a glacier."

There are several splendid portraits of Ludendorff by Professor Petersen, Düsseldorf. Hugo Stinnes commissioned one, life-size, for the Hamburg-America liner *Ludendorff* and, as we were then in Munich, one for his own house. This one was so life-like that I was quite frightened, when I passed the easel in the dusk. Ludendorff always liked to relate how he first met Stinnes on the Eastern Front. He had announced that he would visit the Headquarters of the North-Eastern Army at Kovno; Ludendorff drove to the station to meet him. The train came in and discharged its load. A crowd of men on leave passed the barrier, then a few civilians, none of whom looked at all remarkable or important. Stinnes, the Croesus of Germany, could not be amongst them, thought Ludendorff, but he was there all the same. He was wearing his unpretentious overcoat, his little black tie and bowler hat as he always did. In externals he was always

quite simple and later, until his death, I never saw him in any other clothes.

None the less, he was a man in a thousand, and in his presence one felt that none of his actions could be ordinary or commonplace. I can still hear him saying to me when the revolution was over : " Those who once were at the helm can never come back. A man who strips himself so easily of his power and dignity deserves no better. Those who are to-day at the head of the German state are incapable of unravelling the threads of its political and economic life and steering it on to the right track. Their incompetence will soon bring them down and then the new men will come in. Economic leadership will be the salvation of Germany or will seal her fate."

Professor Schuster-Woldan painted portraits for me of my two sons who were killed in the war. He did so with the aid of some small amateur photographs and I am profoundly grateful to him for the work.

There are several good busts of Ludendorff. Professors Mangel and Klimsch have represented him as a general in the field, whereas Professor Betzner has accentuated the purely human side. Perhaps for that reason I liked his work much better.

CHAPTER III

WHILE we were still in Berlin the first primitive attempts at flying were being made in Germany, France, Belgium and England; the Belgian, Armand Zipfel, aroused particular interest. In this sphere he was considered a pioneer. I think it was in the year 1910 that he came to Berlin with his machine, to show his skill before a great crowd, amongst whom were General Staff officers and their wives.

We waited a long time in the Tempelhoferfeld for what was to happen. Unfortunately, nothing happened at all. Zipfel's efforts were all in vain, not one of his attempts succeeded.

The next was Orville Wright. He let his machine taxi about twenty metres and then thrust off. After several failures he succeeded in remaining several minutes in the air at a moderate height.

The third to appear was the Frenchman, Latham. We expected hours of experiments with little success. Who can describe our astonishment—we stared at him with mouths agape—

when the dapper little fellow climbed into his tiny single-decker and without effort soared like a bird into the air.

Latham reached a height of about three hundred metres and circled twenty minutes above our heads. On landing he was loudly applauded and congratulated on his success with genuine enthusiasm.

France and England were then making the greatest efforts in the domain of the air, and the results achieved by their airmen and aeroplane designers were far more favourable than ours in Germany.

In Johannistal took place the great flying competition for international competitors. The brothers Wright (America), Farman (France), Baron de Cathers (Belgium), and many others more or less well-known airmen took part.

I think I counted in many of the heats, up to seventeen machines in the air at the same time.

I noticed the Frenchman, Farman, fluttering like a lame crow just above the ground. Soon afterwards he crossed the Channel, a feat which can be compared with the recent crossing of the Atlantic.

Germany was represented by Grade, the engineer, at the competition in Johannistal. Some months before I had watched his despairing

unsuccessful attempts, but now he was whirling happily round with the others in the air.

None the less our successes were unquestionably inferior to those of the foreigner. This stimulated the healthy ambition of our military airmen. They set themselves with all their force and energy to improve our flying and before long we had almost overtaken the start which other nations had obtained.

The war, however, caught us quite inadequately prepared for air-warfare. We were short of everything, both of well trained pilots and observers and of good designers and soundly built machines, but this shortage was soon remedied, thanks to the supreme talent for organization shown by General von Hoppner and Colonel Thomsen.

Numerous flying schools were called into being, and German industry succeeded in the shortest possible time in providing the necessary material for the machines.

In this way from its modest beginnings the young German flying corps was forged into a weapon of the first rank.

It is just because of the recent achievement of the German Atlantic flyers that I feel I ought to lay stress on the efforts and sufferings of the pioneers, and the fact that I was personally

acquainted with old Count Zeppelin has been a particularly proud and glad memory. I cannot close this record of our life in Berlin without a reference to Ludendorff's habits and manner of living. He was a man of iron principles. Whether his work kept him up late at night or we had been at a ball or a party, it made no difference : next morning, winter or summer, he was in the saddle by seven o'clock.

He always rode the same way along a track in the Tiegarten or the Gr newald. In later years he always went the same walks without any particular preference for the route or any desire to change it. He was punctual to the minute. Time was not reckoned in our house by hours, but by minutes. He would say for instance, "To-day I shall be back at four o'clock for some food." He would come back on the stroke of four, change his clothes and walk straight into the dining-room. If the soup was not on the table already he would say teasingly, "Well, that's a nice thing, there's nothing to eat in your well-managed home to-day."

He was like that in everything.

CHAPTER IV

MY childhood was a time of unclouded happiness. My grandmother was already a widow when I began to think and understand things. She lived in a splendid old mansion with a huge entrance hall. In niches round the walls, stood statues of the Greek gods, not quite in accordance with our taste to-day. In the background a flight of steps led to the rooms above. A huge hall with a coffered ceiling and three great candelabra inspired me with tremendous awe.

Every Thursday was her "day." My grandmother was a great lady in the social world with a delicious sense of humour. Again and again she had to tell her stories of bygone days. I could have listened to her for hours.

She had seven children. It was a large establishment since besides the governess and the maid there were men-servants in the house. The cost of it was, however, nothing in the light of present expenses. Indeed, our bill for a week's vegetables for the whole household came to perhaps three shillings.

My grandmother possessed four pugs (the fashionable dog of that time). One of them was a particularly valuable specimen. He looked like a tiny lion and bore the name of "Herr Linsenbart." He was the favourite of his mistress and had to be taken with her every afternoon when she went out in her magnificent carriage.

On reaching the "Tents," which was then a particularly fine garden-restaurant, it was impossible to get Herr Linsenbart to pass it without a demonstration. The tiny lion used to bark and whine until someone came out and gave him a tit-bit.

My grandmother also had a black cat with a red ribbon round its neck. It was known as "Fräulein," and played the part of governess to the dogs. When they were let out in the courtyard Fräulein sat on a block of wood and kept an eye on each of them.

I did not go to school, but had a governess. As my sister was a boarder I was much alone and envied the school children their merry games. I was unhappy until I reached a private school where I was put into the third class.

When the French lesson began, I felt quite sorry for my schoolmates, as my own French was positively torrential in its fluency. But I was soon punished. I had never done any

dictation and made about thirty mistakes in my first effort. It was a cruel blow and wounded my pride.

The headmistress spoilt me badly. A teacher once punished me with a bad mark and turned me out of his class. The fourth finger of his right hand was stiff and I put out my hand to report myself, holding my finger stiff. At the next lesson when his anger had evaporated the teacher remitted my bad mark with the words: "Because you are such a pretty little girl."

So much for the schoolmaster's principles.

The headmistress also took no notice of it. Instead she kissed me on the forehead (which I always found difficult to bear), shook her head and said sadly, "Dear ! dear ! you, too, my son Brutus." On leaving school I was married to my first husband. All through my life there ran a sort of red thread of ill-fortune. I had good luck which changed to bad. My grandmother had many precious stones but the most valuable was a solitaire.

We spoke with a certain pride in the family of this valuable gem and when we were alone it was often handed round and admired.

After her death my eldest uncle inherited it, and when he died it came to my mother.

Although she intended me to have the gem at

some future time, she left it as an immediate legacy to a younger brother. He did not live very long and his wife took it for herself.

The bells of victory rang : Tannenberg had been fought. Every German heart beat high and and the rejoicing seemed as though it would never end. My aunt in her enthusiasm, thinking herself no doubt very generous at the time, presented my solitaire, my treasure, my property, not to me, but to my husband.

It was a great mistake if she took it for granted that I, its rightful heiress, would later possess it. Since it was unsafe to dispatch it to the front it remained in my aunt's safe keeping. After the war, there was to be a formal presentation to my husband.

Our great victories were followed by Versailles. The revolution occurred, there were times of great uncertainty and finally came the inflation. My aunt's wealth diminished and the proud moment for the delivery of the jewel never arrived. I determined therefore, in order to assist my aunt financially, to acquire my property by purchase. Now at last I was to get possession of my treasure.

It was locked away in her boudoir and the case was brought out. When it was opened the gem was no longer there, it had been purloined by a dishonest servant. Panic and dismay reigned in

the whole house, for in any case, the jewel represented a small fortune. The thief was discovered, but it was no use. She told the court that on account of its size and sparkle she had thought the gem was an imitation and had fortunately been able to sell it for fifty marks to a foreigner who was bargaining for precious stones in a café. Fifty marks ! and that at the time of the inflation.

That was the history of the solitaire which was mine without my ever possessing it.

I had no better luck with my two legacies. Twice I came into a nice little sum without ever getting a penny of it.

My mother's youngest brother lived in London as a naturalized Englishman. He was young and full of life and only just married when the influenza swept him and his young wife away after a few days' illness. Following the announcement of his death, I was informed by an English solicitor that we benefited under his will. Correspondence took place between English and German lawyers. Then came war. England sequestrated German property and it was only after the conclusion of peace that the legacy could be paid off. It was during the inflation and pound notes were not to be despised. But what happened ? Our solicitor filed his petition and having embezzled a quantity of trust-funds and

put our English notes into his pocket he escaped to America and was never seen again. That was my first legacy.

A few years ago I became an heiress for the second time, or to put it more accurately, I experienced the sensations of one. In the year 1924, despite the fact that her death had occurred in 1918, I was officially notified by the court of the decease at the age of ninety, of a great-aunt by marriage, whom I had only once seen and then for ten minutes. The degree of relationship was a little remote, but all the same—the authorities certainly had not been guilty of undue haste—that much is certain. I had seen my old aunt when I was a girl of fifteen. Her manner was kind and friendly, but she put me through a searching investigation for she had come to a decision which she carried out forthwith. She got up, went to a wonderful old cupboard, and came back with a golden bracelet, broad and heavily made. "Take this, child, on our wedding-day my fiancé put it round my arm. Wear and treasure it in faithful memory of him and me."

I was thrown into confusion less by the bracelet than by the poetical idea of these two lovers. To my flapper's heart the old lady's eccentricity seemed quite too beautiful. The sentimental old woman had made me her heiress, but this time the

effect of the inflation was just as disastrous as the flight of the dishonest attorney had been for my first legacy. I was paid a two-mark note—the paltry remnant of billions when converted into stabilized currency. I wanted to frame it in memory of my old aunt and also as a symbol of my good fortune. Even as a child the goddess of Fortune treated me with marked reserve. In a charity lottery I won a whole silver tea-set with all its fittings. I was very pleased.

My mother went with me to bring home my prize. She felt in her pocket for the purse with the winning ticket. I can see her to-day searching and feeling everywhere for it and then turning pale. The purse was gone and the winning ticket with it. It was like that later in my life. Whatever my good luck brought me my bad luck snatched away.

CHAPTER V

WE had been sorry to leave Berlin and it was a great blow to be separated from our friends and relations.

Ludendorff had hoped in his heart that he would be given a Brandenburger Regiment. Instead of that he became commander of the Lower Rheinisch Fusilier Regiment No. 39. Since the war it has been the Ludendorff Regiment.

When his first disappointment had worn away, his brief and manly comment was as follows—
“The soldier has no personal ends to pursue. He goes where he is sent. That’s enough about it.”

We had certainly nothing to grumble about in Düsseldorf. From the very beginning we were delighted with the lovely city on the Rhine with its carefully tended public gardens. Art and science found a home there, the theatre was good, the concerts were better and the cheerful friendliness of the inhabitants was renowned. In a few days we found a suitable house with a large garden which particularly pleased us. In front of the dining-room was a cosy veranda with a

terrace from which broad steps led down to the garden. The Royal Park, the Rhine and the Rhinebridge were quite near. In the regiment also we were soon quite at home in spite of the many strangers who now came into our lives.

Ludendorff's predecessor had died very suddenly of a heart attack and his widow still lived in Düsseldorf. She felt herself compelled to continue her educative influence on the officers' wives, as she had done while still the wife of the colonel.

Soon after my arrival I was ordered to report to her and received the usual lesson in deportment. I was instructed how to conduct myself as wife of the commanding officer in such a way as to command respect and to create a suitable position for myself. I was not, however, much edified by this lecture, because I imagined that I had already mastered the rules of good manners. I had not come from a small garrison but from Berlin, where we had considerable social duties to perform and numbered persons of rank and importance among our guests.

The wife of the former colonel, however, had a natural tendency to give good advice. A major's wife, lately transferred from Metz to the regiment, had an even stranger experience. She was informed that her way of doing her hair was

quite impossible here in Düsseldorf. She replied with calm determination that she would follow no regulations of this character and would in future do her hair as she chose.

She was a woman with a great deal of backbone and inspired with genuine patriotism as she showed in the war.

She had, however, some small peculiarities which aroused our good-humoured chaff. She would never quite tear herself away from Metz. If the sole of her boot gave out or a heel went crooked, it had to be sent by post to Metz because there and there alone could shoes be properly soled. I once asked the major's wife how she managed to preserve the first bloom and neatness of her white hat for so long. She looked at me and said with great surprise, "Oh, you are quite wrong, it is not always the same hat. I have five of them all alike, and I change them according to the weather and my reason for wearing them. In the war the major's wife was a faithful adherent of the Fatherland Party, founded by Von Tirpitz. She attended all meetings even when the Bolshevik influences began to make themselves felt and resulted in violent affrays. That soldiers from the Front should tear their iron crosses off and throw them at the speakers made her so angry that she pro-

claimed her displeasure at the top of her voice. She took part in the debates and was quite fearless in employing her umbrella to goad to his feet any member of the audience who failed to join in the cheers for Emperor and Fatherland with sufficient alacrity.

I must say a word or two about two captains of our regiment who particularly distinguished themselves at the siege of Verdun, and the storming of the position known as "the Dead Man." One of them was in recognition of his services transferred to the General Staff, the other was sent back to the garrison in disgrace. Between laughter and tears he told me what he had done and what an unlucky wretch he was.

The adjutant of his commanding officer had requested him on the telephone to report himself with other officers for an important conference at Corps Headquarters where he was to undertake new duties. He was to come in a lorry !

As the captain knew that there were plenty of military cars available he retorted angrily : " What ass has given this order ? " The cold reply came back : " His Excellency the General-Officer-in-Command."

Twenty-four hours later the captain was removed from his post. At home he had to endure a good deal of chaff, as it was not the first

time that his frankness had entailed undesirable consequences.

As quite a young lieutenant he had exchanged Berlin and a Guards regiment for the fortress of Inowrazlaw.

In his boyhood he was a regular handful and had got into one serious scrape. He poured ink into the receptacles for holy water in the Cathedral of his native town and, full of mischievous delight, hid himself to watch the pious folk dip their fingers in the black Holy Water and cross themselves. His offence was discovered and the little malefactor was severely punished. His father, the General-in-Command, had willy-nilly to put on his helmet and make an official apology to the Archbishop. And the Cathedral had to be consecrated afresh.

I should like to add two other little stories of our time at Düsseldorf. My little daughter, then about thirteen, had happened to express a wish to possess a live tortoise.

Somebody must have heard it, and spread the news abroad, because on her birthday, all the ladies of the regiment appeared with tortoises as their presents, large and small, a perfect zoo.

The second story concerns Ludendorff himself.

We gave our first official reception. Only the officers of the regiment and their wives were

invited. Ludendorff, as the brand-new colonel, had seated himself in the smoking-room and was telling the young men tales of the time when he was still a lieutenant. "And I was never ill, with the exception of a severe chill when I had no choice but to report myself sick. But that was only for two days."

Into the admiring silence of his hearers broke my youngest boy, a cadet, fifteen years old, with these words: "Then, father, you don't count your attacks of gout."

Sensation and a burst of laughter!

A remarkable woman in her way was the wife of a general whom I should like to mention here, although she had nothing to do with Düsseldorf. She was possessed by a demon of cleanliness. If you paid a call on Her Excellency, you had to climb over a mountain of buckets, besoms, and brushes, in order to reach the presence of the All Highest. In addition the wife of the general had a somewhat thrifty character. It was known that at the gigantic receptions and dances which she had to give, the following arrangement was made between her and the man who supplied the sandwiches. Four separate tables of sandwiches were to be supplied, but if no inroads had been made upon the first, the caterer was to take it back without charge.

One can well imagine the mischievous pleasure

with which the lieutenants rushed at all four tables simultaneously. But against such attacks, the general's wife was already armed. She took up her position with a long Japanese fan in front of the fourth table, and with the friendliest smile in the world, tapped anyone on the finger who wanted to despoil it until the other tables had been picked clean.

When her husband took his departure, the officers of the corps wished to give him the usual parting gift. It caused, however, some embarrassment when the adjutant, whose duty it had been by tactful sounding to ascertain the wishes of the general's wife, came back with the reply that what she really wanted was a rocking-bath.

They did not know what to do, a rocking-bath really seemed too prosaic. So they went to a silversmith and had a fruit basket made in the shape of the article desired, which they filled with roses and presented to Her Excellency.

Her son, who was also an officer, always wore an enormous monocle, and even in China in the Far Eastern campaign, he was never seen without his eyeglass. After an exhausting ride he was one evening searching for quarters for the night, and entered a house in which there reigned the profoundest darkness, along with a peculiarly oppressive silence.

When he explored further he stumbled over a body, the corpse of a man, and near it another one, and then more corpses everywhere. The whole place was nothing but a great charnel house. Victims of the Boxer Rising! As he stumbled about, his monocle fell from his eye. But he did not leave the house until, in spite of his violent disgust, he had recovered his eyeglass from among the dead, and fixed it again in its place.

As in all probability we should not remain long in Düsseldorf, we limited our social relations, apart from the officers of the regiment, to very few families.

In the house of one of the high Government officials, which served as the centre of the intellectual and artistic life of the town, I made the acquaintance of Professor Edward von Gebhardt, and Professor Roeber, the Director of the Academy, and I have to thank both these men for much artistic pleasure.

Professor Roeber showed me his treasures in person, and directed my attention to all their beauties. I was particularly impressed by the plaster casts of the Russian sculptor, Baron Kloth, who carved the group of horses which were later cast in bronze for the Czar's Palace in Petersburg.

At the request of Professor von Gebhardt, I visited him in his studio. He was then painting

his well-known picture of the sea fight at Coronel, in which Admiral Count Spee and his two sons lost their lives. The principal figure in this picture is an angel, who hovers above the waters with hands outstretched in benediction over the dead and drowning men. The master had studied the foldwork for the garment of this figure by dipping a piece of cloth in gelatine. I watched him at his work with the deepest interest, and he presented me with one of his pictures which I treasure as the apple of my eye.

He was then nearly eighty years old, and his art had reached its zenith. His bodily and mental vigour was such that he could stand erect on the swaying scaffolding of the Marinekirche and paint its roof.

I saw many of the best and finest works of Gebhardt in the house of Professor Oeder. It was a perfect museum. The walls in the dining-room were covered with old English tapestry of inestimable value, and his Japanese collection—bronzes, terra-cottas, carved ivories, and delicate lacquer work of perfect craftsmanship—were well known in artistic circles. He was himself a fine painter, and his wife, a sister of the well-known manufacturer, Franz Haniel, acted as hostess with great dignity. In the manufacturer's club of Düsseldorf I came into contact with many

other leading men among the great industrials of the Rhine Province. Privy Councillor Duisberg invited me to visit Leeverkusen, the sphere to which his energies were devoted. I was overwhelmed by the mighty factory of world renown in which men were working day and night for the army's needs, and famous scientists were creating by their researches substitutes for those raw materials of which the blockade deprived us.

A few days before our visit there had been a serious explosion, and at every step there were traces of destruction which brought the disaster home to us.

The houses of the workmen and officials were built on model lines, quite a little world of its own, neat little houses with flowers on the windowsills, nestling in their trim flower-gardens.

I also visited the elder Thyssen with my daughter at his splendid mansion at Landsberg near Muhlheim in the Wupps. In the morning we were shown over his foundry. It was a remarkable sight we saw when the door of the great furnace opened and the masses of ore streamed out white-hot to cool in the shape of a gigantic iron tube. Schloss Landsberg is an old family mansion. It lies on a height and one gets from it an incomparable view over the broad valley at the foot of the hill. At lunch my aged host re-



GENERAL LUDENDORFF'S BIRTHPLACE
The family home at Kruszezewnia in the province of Posen.

counted how he had begun as a young man with very little money but with good luck on his side, had gradually built his factory. He had never kept ready money in his purse. Every penny had to be kept moving and do its duty.

After lunch amid the blooming roses, palms and orange trees, we drank our coffee in a hall which contained the costliest treasure our host possessed. On massive pedestals of sandstone stood a row of Rodin's masterpieces. What a wonderful repose it must have been for the old man to linger in this Temple of Art when the burden and care of the day was over and the gigantic labours which were the purpose and meaning of his life were done !

Unwittingly I had come on his seventy-fifth birthday and I encountered a whole group of remarkable men. Fritz Thyssen, with his lovely wife, was also present.

In Düsseldorf, free from all worry, I passed the happiest days of my life. I shall never, I fear, look on it again. Few of those with whom I was in closest contact are still living there. Most of them have been scattered to the four winds by the changed conditions of life which have resulted from the war, the revolution and the period of inflation.

The officers for the most part were killed.

CHAPTER VI

THE promotion of Ludendorff to be General-in-Command of the 85th Brigade meant that we were transferred to Strasbourg.

Again we had to leave behind us what we had already fallen in love with. We had scarce grown accustomed to the sparkling gaiety and kindly natures of the Rheinlander before we were moved away. A soldier's lot !

What affected us most was leaving the Rhine itself. The beauty of the rather heavy, peaceful landscape of the lower Rhine had gradually grown upon us. It was always a fresh delight to stand on the shores of the mighty river and follow the play of the various colours. Sometimes the clouds hung low in the sky and spread a sombre sadness over land and stream. Then up would spring a wind, lash the waves and cleave the gloomy greyness of the sky, so that suddenly the distance broke into the brightness of a thousand hues, from the most delicate blue to the deepest violet.

Those were pictures which took hold of the

soul, there was no doubt about that. But I knew that Strasbourg, "the marvellous city," would compensate us with loveliness of another kind.

This time it was not so easy to find a suitable residence. It was long past the time when the promotions for the New Year are gazetted, and every house was already occupied. We had to take a flat, which had neither balcony, bow-window, or garden, but its large and splendid rooms were a certain compensation.

I had never been in Alsatia, and was surprised and delighted by its beauty. The whole country was a single garden, all in flower. When we came there the roses were in the full bloom of their glory, as I had never yet seen them. Great waves of fragrance were borne upon the breeze.

I loved Strasbourg from the first moment. Everything I saw delighted me. It was an idyllic sight to see the peasants drive past our window in the early morning from the neighbouring town of Rupprechtsau, their wagons loaded with fruit, vegetables, poultry and other farm produce.

Above the maze of the ancient houses, which, for the most part, betrayed their French origin, the Cathedral climbed aloft into the sky. The narrow, angular streets opened out suddenly and let the eye range over palaces and gardens

worthy of the painter's skill. Roses, glycinias and clematis climbed close beneath the gables of the houses.

I loved the Cathedral most of all. I never went into the town without spending at least some moments in the peace of the house of God. Often I stood in admiration before the high tower which gave the effect of the most delicate fret-work. I used to gaze at it, bathed in the purple of the setting sun, rearing itself heavenwards in all its splendour and glory, as though it wished to transport the prayers of the faithful right up to the throne of God. In contrast to the modesty of the old town, where the palatial buildings on the Broglie built in early French style—the massive façades broken by high broad windows which with their white-framed window-panes reached down to the ground and were protected by iron trellis-work of real artistic merit. . . .

The finest mansions were those of the Suffragan Bishop of Strasbourg, Zorn von Bulach, and General von Deimling, the Commander of the Garrison. I can still see those proud edifices before my eye. From the hall a flight of steps led up to the high, well-lighted rooms. In the palace, occupied by Deimling, a life-size portrait of Napoleon I hung in one of the halls ; this had been pierced by a bullet during the siege of

Strasbourg in 1870, which penetrated the picture in the exact position of the heart.

Ludendorff's Brigade consisted of a Prussian and a Saxon regiment. The Prussian colonel had been long in the Turkish service, and contributed much to the building up of the Turkish army.

They said of him that he bore a charmed life against bullets, a rumour which had a great effect on his troops in the World-War. They clung to him with blind fanaticism and followed him fiercely through a storm of grenades and wherever the bullets rained most thickly. Despite his reputation, he was killed, fighting valiantly, and the colonel of the Saxon regiment fell, like his colleague, in one of the early battles.

We had not been long in Strasbourg before my sons, Franz and Erich, came from the cadet corps at Lichterfelde to spend their summer leave at our house. It was a wonderful time. We went excursions into the Vosges to Molsheim, Schirmeck, and Schlettstadt and up the mountains of Donon and Hohkonigsburg. We climbed the mountains in really incredible heat, and also visited Zabern.

It lay peacefully embedded in its gardens, surrounded by woods and fields. There was nothing to remind us of the violent collisions

which had taken place between the Francophile portion of the population and the soldiery a few months before. It was long, however, before the political horizon which had been heavily overcast by currents of feeling hostile to Germany, could clear up. Ludendorff attended the great autumn manœuvres in the neighbourhood of Bitsch, while I went to Lucerne in Switzerland, with my two sons. My third son, Heinz, was an ensign with his regiment at Altona, and my daughter was staying with relations in Berlin. We left Strasbourg in the depth of peace, and were to tread its streets again on the very eve of war.

CHAPTER VII

IN Lucerne I passed, with my dear boys, soon to be torn from me by the war, my last weeks of untroubled happiness. With open hearts and open eyes we gave ourselves up to enjoy the beauties of nature. My children were young and energetic, and every day they stirred me up to some excursion, by rail or boat or car or on foot.

There was scarcely a corner of the town which we did not explore. We often stood before the resting lions and let the gnarled vigour of the memorial have its full effect upon us. The arsenal with its old weapons and instruments formed the chief attraction for the boys. The huge spiked clubs, mortars, catapults and muskets which the Swiss used in their war of liberation, were objects we examined with the closest scrutiny.

I contemplated these instruments of death with no foreboding ; I never suspected that a few weeks later my own children would be confronting the foe with weapons in their hands. In our happiness we troubled ourselves little about what

went on in the world, and the Swiss nervously withheld the news of the conflict between Austria and Serbia.

One day I was called to the telephone. From the distance came Ludendorff's voice ; there were serious political complications which he dreaded, and which might lead to war : it would consequently be best for us at once to return to Germany by the shortest route.

I stood staring in my horror and alarm, and for a time was unable to collect my thoughts. However, I pulled myself together and rushed in great excitement from the room. In the passage I was met by the lady who owned the hotel in a great state of mind. She tried to stop me, but failed. " Let me go, I must leave at once." She implored me to keep my news from the other guests, otherwise the whole season would be ruined.

They had known the position perfectly well, but on selfish grounds had concealed the things which would most alarm us. In hot haste we collected our luggage and left Lucerne by the next train. At the station in Basle a quite indescribable confusion reigned. The Germans were streaming in feverish haste to the frontier of their land. In the train the crush was terrifying. Every corridor was packed and piled high with

luggage. When we neared Strasbourg we could see far off the tower of the Cathedral in the evening sunshine. It stood there in quiet majesty, unaffected by earthly cares and human distress.

Ludendorff met us at the station, the manœuvres had been prematurely curtailed, and the troops already recalled to their garrisons.

My boys had a thousand questions which as future officers intimately concerned them. They were enthusiastic at the thought of the war. "Hurrah, war, we shall soon get to the Front." Their questions and Ludendorff's answers struck me to the heart. I could well understand my boys, and yet I was a mother, and thought with horror at the prospect of giving up my sons for their country.

That night as I lay sleepless in bed, I remembered my childhood, and how my mother was never tired of telling us of the war of 1870-71. She simply had to tell us how it all happened right from the beginning. First of all she told us about Ems and the old Emperor, and how the people met him with a storm of enthusiastic cheers after his interview with the French Ambassador, Benedetti. How splendid it had been when the first news of victory came from the Front, and complete strangers in laughter and tears embraced each other. The linen was fetched

from the cupboards and people sat round a table until far into the night, making lint for the wounded. My mother told me with pride how her eldest brother who was then only sixteen, fought in the Dragoon Guards at the battle of Mars la Tour. The end of the story, the finest part of all, was the entrance of the troops in Berlin. Every house was decked with garlands and waving flags, and in the evening the town was illuminated and bathed in a sea of light. In my childish soul I thought of it with a sigh of deep regret : I said to myself, you will never see times like that. And now my childish dream was to be fulfilled, and how differently I felt about it ! I stared with open eyes into the darkness and my heart was heavy with grim forebodings. I knew only too well the meaning of a war on two Fronts with France and Russia. My husband and my three boys would certainly go out at once. . . . God in heaven stand by me in my need. I firmly decided to show no evidence of my anxiety. As wife and mother of soldiers, it was not for me to appear timid and dejected. Strasbourg was like a swarm of ants which has been stirred up into excited activity. People streamed in hordes to read the telegrams which told us hour by hour how things were going. If we had not been so immersed in our own thoughts, we could have

noted some interesting studies in human character. A realization of how serious the time was, anxiety and excitement, white-lipped terror at the possibility of war, and with it all a cheerful satisfaction that the day of reckoning had come. We could see it all on the faces of the people which showed us every varying shade of emotion. The leave of my boys was not yet over, but Ludendorff sent them back to the cadet corps so that in case of war they should be at their posts. Silent and without a tear, I stared at the train which bore them away. Destiny went on its course. But once more for a moment everything seemed likely to turn out well. As we sat at our midday meal, Ludendorff said to me : " Do you know, I think the boys need not have gone, after all. Prince Henry of Prussia is negotiating with the Czar, and there is some hope that an understanding will be reached. It looks as though the black storm-clouds are passing away." This was at one o'clock in the afternoon. Two hours later, at three o'clock, an orderly brought in a flimsy which only contained two letters, D.K.—imminent danger of war—I knew all I wanted to. It was no longer possible to avert the evil thing, and I felt myself go white to the lips.

Ludendorff was also impressed and alarmed by the seriousness of the situation. Hours of

grave anxiety followed, but we had little time to give rein to our emotions, when so much had to be settled and put in order.

Ludendorff could not bear the thought of leaving me alone in Strasbourg. It was so close to the frontier and would soon be overrun by a stream of Frenchmen. "You must leave Strasbourg before I do," he said, "so that I can know that you are in safety, and be easy in my mind." It was then decided that I should go to Berlin and there with my daughter await the course of the war. Then we set to work. We had to collect our furniture since it was very possible that the rooms would be used as a hospital or as offices.

All our household goods, with cushions, carpets, and hangings, were stored in one room. Our trunks had to be packed at express speed, as my train for Berlin left at six o'clock.

We worked as though we each had six hands instead of two. I never realized how much we had accomplished in a short time until I saw our flat again, twelve months afterwards.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR cook, Paulina, had been with us many years, and enjoyed our complete confidence and admiration. In the course of time she had developed into our factotum with 80 per cent of good qualities and 20 per cent of bad ones.

She was born in Silesia, and was a typical representative of her country. Her employers were, for her, the essence of all that was worth her admiration, and she regarded it as her highest duty to render them faithful suit and service, even if that duty involved self-sacrifice.

She loved us all, my boys and myself most of all. Sometimes her love degenerated into jealousy, and Lena, my good maid, had to put up with a good deal. But a kind word easily put things to rights. Little Paulina would forget her annoyance and dissolve in a happy smile—until next time.

Whether she was in one of her good or bad moods, it made no difference ; as a good Catholic she went to church early every morning, and brought its blessing back to our home.

My husband, for all his reserve, had always a kind and friendly word for "little Paulina," a form of address which she acknowledged with a bright smile on her honest, round countenance.

When my cadets came on leave, Paulina used to appear with her thick book of recipes, like a serjeant come for the orders of his superior officer. All the favourite dainties had to be cooked and I often said to her, "Paulina, once again you've got quite a mother's outlook." She blushed and murmured: "You don't find people like our young gentlemen twice in the world."

The last day before the declaration of war was particularly exciting in Strasbourg. The exchange between individual countries was followed with wild excitement. In the evening before the decisive day, we were sitting in our living-room with heavy hearts, when suddenly there was a knock at the door.

Paulina walked in. She looked confused, excused herself hastily, and manifested traces of great alarm. "Up till now I have always hoped, but according to this newspaper, the world is just full of despair." She handed my husband the latest special edition, which was being sold in the streets, and her features bore a look of such utter misery that we both felt sorry for her, and pressed her to take a seat.

Looking straight before her she suddenly asked Ludendorff whether he thought that the Second Dragoon Guards would be sent at once to the Front. "I don't only think it, little Paulina, I can tell it to you for a certainty. The Cavalry regiments of the Guards will be sent at once against France." Paulina's answer was a dreadful shriek. She sank back, and the colour left her face. We could not understand it, and did not know what to do. Was it possible that little Paulina, the pious, the virtuous, had a sweetheart among the Dragoons? Quite impossible! "She must already be at least thirty-five.

At last she pulled herself together with a worn smile on her face, and almost weeping, she got out these words: "I simply must own up. I have got a son in the regiment."

My husband and I had all we could do to conceal our laughter. At last I succeeded in finding my self-control and tried to comfort her. "Little Paulina, if you have got a strapping cavalryman for a son, you must show what a brave soldier's mother you can be." When she was a little calmer, we waited for her to take her leave. We waited in vain. She sat on, quite contrary to her usual respectful behaviour, she talked of one thing and another, and then suddenly burst out anxiously with this question. "Are

the Riesenbourg cuirassiers also going to the Front? They are so far away from France." "Yes, they are," replied Ludendorff, "you must remember, little Paulina, we are going to have a war on two fronts. The Riesenbourg cuirassiers will be the first to march against Russia."

His words were followed by an oppressive silence. Paulina stared at us pale as death, finally she whispered: "Oh, God, I've got a son with them, too."

The situation was terrible, and immeasurably pathetic, none the less it did not lack a certain touch of comedy. The sorrow that for years she had carefully suppressed, showed plainly in the anxious looks of Paulina, and yet—to think of it, our pattern of virtue, thirty-five years old and with two sons—the thought was overpowering.

After her last confession she rose to her feet wearily, and staggered to the door. We looked at each other and shook our heads. We simply could not grasp it, but it was much better to question and probe no further.

CHAPTER IX

IT was time to say good-bye. My heart was heavier than I can say. I stood up straight at the window of my carriage and stared completely broken, at my husband, who stood by the train.

Everything I loved lay behind me ; husband and children, a family, a home, they were mine no longer. I went out into the world with my lonely mother's soul, and nothing before me but a great uncertainty. Ludendorff believed that my train was the last to leave Strasbourg according to the time-table. In this he was mistaken. An unholy confusion reigned supreme. There were no train attendants, and no restaurant cars available. Every carriage was packed, and even in the corridors between mountains of luggage, men were sitting and lying who did not even know where they were going. It was a hot evening in July, and every moment the air became closer and more unbearable. The people collapsed like flies, and nothing could be done to help them, as there was not a drop of water on the whole train.

In the middle of the night we reached Ludwigshafen. An official shouted: "Everyone must leave the train, it travels empty over the Rhine Bridge and can be entered again at Mannheim." No one was ready, and hastily amid the grumbles of the crowded train, we seized our luggage. Slowly the big train was emptied.

I stood there without a plan. My handbag was much too heavy for me, and there were no porters. I quickly decided to leave my trunks with all my valuables, money and papers to their fate, and hurried out. The electric trams which should have taken us round to Mannheim, were quite insufficient. In the crush somebody tore my vanity-bag from my arm, and I was roughly pushed aside. The trams began to move without me, and the last beam of light went out. Ludwigshafen lay as though dead, veiled in pitch-black darkness. All the lights had been turned out.

I stood alone in a strange town, without hat or coat, money or ticket, or anything. My position was terrible, and I never felt so miserable in my life before. I still shudder when I think of that moment.

Then, in my deepest need, I heard a shout, and saw a beam of light. A car—with the courage of despair, I ran into the middle of the road and called to the chauffeur. He stopped. I recognized

that it was a military car with an officer whom I knew inside. I was saved. In the car I noticed for the first time that my nerves were strained almost to breaking. It was only just in time.

We travelled over the Rhine Bridge, where officers sat at small tables, and with darkened lanterns carried out a strict control of the traffic. My companion had to show his papers and guarantee my identity.

Some soldiers were detailed, and standing with fixed bayonets on the steps of the car, they conducted us to Mannheim station. I found my carriage again and my luggage was undisturbed.

Early in the morning we reached Kassel. A light mist lay above the town. Although the summer was still at its height, the harvest on the slopes and meadows was already over-ripe. The station presented a remarkable spectacle. The platform was covered with countless cups of coffee, and plates of sausages and rock cakes lay about everywhere. There was nothing for it, I simply had to eat and drink. Think of it, sausages and rock cakes at five o'clock in the morning.

When the train went on, I stood long at the window and gazed out. The woods lay clothed in soft green. The peasants were working in the fields, and the cattle grazed in the pastures. A deep peace lay over the plains of Germany.

CHAPTER X

AND now I was in Berlin. I went in the afternoon of August 1st for a walk with my daughter in the Kurfürstendamm, and there we heard the sullen boom of the bells in the Memorial Church of the Emperor William. For a moment or two the roar of the great town died away, war had been declared. I had still hoped, what I hoped for I do not know myself. Perhaps I had believed that a miracle would happen, because I wanted to think so, and now the terrible thing was there—war. I staggered, and big tears ran down my cheeks. This time my strength failed me, and my resolution was at an end. My brother-in-law, Jahn, said to me in his kind way : “ You simply must not be so unhappy. Your time of trial won’t last long. A modern war is finished at most in four or five months. No country could go on longer than that. All of them, including naturally our own, would be simply bankrupt. You will soon have your dear ones with you again.”

It was not the first time that I had heard this point of view expressed. While we were still

at peace the cry was always, that wars of to-day cannot last long. At the time I thought that if my brother-in-law, the Under-Secretary for the Treasury, talks like this, if a man who has control over German finances and knows all the circumstances, has formed this view, surely it must be right. It gave me a little gleam of hope.

But how wrong he was. Everything happened differently. All those brilliant and highly placed persons were out in their reckoning. The months became years, and they were years in which our troubles and terrors never left us. I took up my residence at the Westens Hospice, along with many of my friends. For the most part the rooms were rented by the families of officers. As long as he was in Berlin the Quartermaster-General von Stein, rented a room there. I had much society and was seldom alone. It was then that I got the following letter from Ludendorff, my first from the theatre of war, dated July 31st, 1914.

“MY OWN WIFE,

“You have just gone, and it gives me a feeling of emptiness which never leaves me. Let me tell you once again that I love you more than anything in the world. How heavy those last hours were ! Our life lies behind us, though we parted with the heartening consciousness of

our mutual affection. But it is hard, hard for the husband and far harder for the wife, who stays at home and knows that husband and children are facing the foe. Do not, however, allow yourself to give way. There can be no greater enterprise than ours, to defend our country with our blood. My own wife, I know of nothing more lofty and more compelling. And the struggle which is beginning, how immeasurably great it will be. God grant that its end be the honour and greatness of Germany. Try and realize what it means, and in your sorrow make your sacrifice for our country. Yes, my own wife, the task laid on you is terribly difficult, and in my thoughts I shall always be near you, hold you and support you. I am waiting eagerly for your letters, M—— Hotel, in the place you know of. I wonder what your journey was like, and what sort of rooms you have found in Berlin. I wonder if you have seen the boys. I should think it would be unlikely, as we have to mobilize at night, it's high time and we cannot waste a moment more. Our Emperor has a difficult task, since on him alone rests the terrible responsibility of war or peace. He has done everything to avoid the war, and can say so with a clear conscience. And now, fate must run its course.

“ I am thirsting for a man's work to do, and it will be given me in full measure. Pray for me

beloved, that my efforts may be crowned with success. I send you many warm kisses.

“ In deep affection,

“ YOUR OWN HUSBAND.”

I often went to see my sons at Lichterfelde. The journey was beset with difficulties, as the fairy story of the Gold Motor-Car had then gained currency ; people thought they saw motors everywhere, particularly at night, rushing by at top speed and bearing the millions which France had exchanged with Russia. A panic fear of spies had already begun.

My car was frequently held up by the sentries and searched and I myself had to undergo a strict examination.

On my last visit to Lichterfelde I found my son Franz, already on the list of those who were passing out, and Erich who was then just sixteen was on guard with a loaded rifle. The railway embankment between Potsdam and Berlin had been entrusted to the cadets to guard, and faithfully they did their duty, those fine young fellows.

I did not have long to wait before Erich returned. He told me with pride that he had been on duty for ten hours and was overjoyed at being allowed to do his part, even though it was a small one and on the home front. “ But, Mother mine, soon it will be much more splendid.

I have been examined by the doctor and passed fit for service. Height and chest measurement all up to the right standard. In a short time I shall join the regiment as an ensign."

My heart began to beat. This boy would soon go out to the Front. How proud, how radiantly happy he was when he told me. My heart was sore and sank within me. And yet if he had spoken in any other way I should not have understood it. I did not get back to Berlin until late—dense crowds barred the streets and surrounded the hospice. There were angry cries and murmurs and then a shout and again and again the word "spy" reached my ears. I had scarcely got my foot on the step of my car when many hands caught me and pulled me into the house. The door was locked behind me.

I looked round and noticed to my astonishment two policemen with revolvers in their belts standing by General von Stein. Round him stood several very excited men and again I heard someone say "But it *is* a spy."

When von Stein saw me a melancholy smile lit up his face. "What do you say to that, gracious lady? Now they even take me for a spy."

Things had gone ill with the poor general. He had left the buildings of the General Staff in deep thought as he had just had a highly important

conference with Moltke. Pondering deeply, he crossed the Königsplatz. Suddenly he noticed that he was being observed. This displeased him and he quickened his steps but without effect for those who watched him pressed hard on his heels.

He hastily decided to make for his usual small restaurant by a circuitous route and have his evening meal there. In this way he hoped to throw off his tiresome pursuers.

When, however, after a good half-hour he came back into the street he noticed that his pursuers had waited for him and were again at his heels. They followed him to the hospice and having enlisted the aid of two policemen they even burst into his room. They angrily demanded that he should be arrested as a spy.

There was nothing for it but the Quartermaster-General must show his identity papers. That set their minds at rest and they retired. The following extract from the document embodying the grounds of suspicion against the general is interesting. "In war a real general would have no time to go meandering about the streets. He would neither have the time nor the inclination to visit a restaurant and above all, a general would not wear—excuse us—such shiny trousers." Sensation.

When General von Stein had related his ex-

periences and swallowed his first annoyance, he joined in the laughter more heartily than anyone.

I returned to the hospice after celebrating my birthday on August 5th and was met by cries of joy. I was completely taken aback and had not the remotest idea what had happened. General von Stein had brought home the first news of our victory at the storming of Liège. I hung on his lips as he told the story and eagerly followed everything he said. He finished by saying : " And now, gracious lady, I have kept my real bit of good news to the end. Your husband is the hero of Liège. The Kaiser has conferred the Order of Merit on him and General von Emmich."

A brilliant victory five days after the outbreak of war. My husband, my own husband the conqueror, the hero of Liège, having won the Order of Merit ! My head was in a whirl. I went to my room. I had to be alone.

Half an hour later the others came to me and brought me flowers. General von Stein made a speech ending in cheers for the Kaiser, the Fatherland and my husband. Then they left me again. I sat there long, deep in thought. How had it all happened. Naturally I had had no news from the Front.

In those nights I made the acquaintance of anxiety and sleeplessness. They are companions who have been faithful to me from that day to this.

CHAPTER XI

I MUST say a word or two about Liége as I often heard the tale from Ludendorff's lips.

At the outbreak of war in accordance with his mobilization orders he went from Strasbourg to Aix-la-Chapelle as Senior Quartermaster-General. When on the march through Belgium, von Wussow, the Commander of the 14th Brigade, was killed, Ludendorff took command of the leaderless troops and led them to the environs of Liége.

In the evening he found that his men were completely exhausted and spent with the dreadful fatigue of their forced marches. They lay about on the wayside pathetic, depressed and desperate. He roused them up. He traversed the whole front, company by company, and said a kindly word to all.

His example gave them fresh strength. They were stirred by his courage and his iron will to victory. In that night they pushed on vigorously towards Liége. In the dead of the night they lost their way and had to change their direction.

Finally after a long search the right route was discovered.

With great caution Ludendorff led his men up to the fortress, but for all his care, whole companies were taken prisoners by the Belgians who made desperate sallies from the forts. Having come to the conclusion that Liège had been evacuated, Ludendorff entered the town next morning and penetrated to the citadel in order to convince himself that his conclusion as to the military position was correct. The citadel seemed deserted. Silence reigned. After loud and repeated knocks the doors were at length opened and Ludendorff observed to his great surprise that the citadel was by no means deserted, but contained hundreds of soldiers. They surrendered without resistance.

But to get out of the fortress was far more difficult than to get in. Unfortunately the motor broke down. Another car had to be requisitioned and the driving of it entrusted to a Belgium reservist. Ludendorff was absolutely at the mercy of this enemy soldier. He asked himself with misgivings what would happen now and where he would be taken. But after some hours he was lucky enough to reach Aix-la-Chapelle.

There the rumour of the taking of Liège had already spread. Simultaneously there was a

report that Ludendorff had been killed. On his unexpected return they stared at him as though he were a ghost. In particular his own orderly was quite unable to grasp what had happened and it was long before he could be reassured.

On the next day with the fall of the forts of Louçoun, the fortress was completely in our hands. After a short bombardment a breach was made in the armour-plated defences and the fort fell tumbling into ruins. The garrison crept out from the debris, black with powder, with distorted features, mad with terror.

Our German soldiers who had been prisoners in the fortress were thus released. One of the imprisoned officers had to climb the tower and run up a white flag in token of surrender.

The officer in command of Liège, General Leman, was made prisoner.

Later he declared that Belgium was already the ally of France before the declaration of war and that shortly before its outbreak, French engineer officers had been in Liège to test its defences. They announced that they were completely satisfied and took their leave with these words: "General, your fortress is unassailable."

In Lorraine also they found, particularly in the extreme southern districts, lists compiled

by the French military authorities of German subjects to be called up for the French Army.

It is interesting to note how both before and during the war the French propaganda worked without scruple. In the New Year of 1918, during the victorious progress of the 18th Army Corps, which our cousin, General von Hutier, commanded, the Kaiser visited the troops.

Long tables were set up in the open air and maps stretched out on them to explain the strategic position.

Either through inadvertence or treachery a copy of a photograph of this scene fell into the hands of the French. The photograph was "faked." Maps, compasses and other drawing materials were eliminated in order that the photograph might be decorated with a fine array of champagne bottles.

Some days later French airmen dropped propaganda leaflets over the German lines with pictures of the forged photographs. Underneath the picture the following words were printed : " German soldiers, take notice ! This is the way your Kaiser, your supreme war-lord, makes merry, and with him your generals and officers, while you have to lie and starve in the trenches and be torn to pieces by the enemies' guns."

CHAPTER XII

THE most alarming rumours were abroad of the position on the Eastern Front.

It was said that General Rennenkampf, the most dreaded of all the Russian Army leaders and a bitter enemy of Germany, had crossed the frontier and was advancing without a pause. It was a fact that our troops who had already been on Russian territory were continually retreating and were about to retire behind the Weichsel.

We had built great hopes on General von Prittwitz, the Commander in the East who had formerly commanded the Seventeenth Corps in Danzig. He had the reputation of understanding the Russian situation.

Later on we heard that from the beginning he had been nervous and alarmed by the superiority of the enemy in numbers. He put the blame on everyone except himself. His Chief of Staff was Count Waldersee, the nephew of the well-known Field-Marshal, who had commanded in the Far Eastern Campaign.

Be that as it may, the position in the East

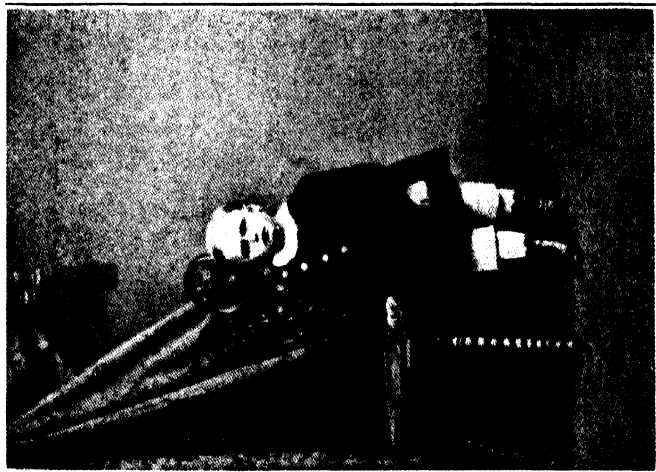
was extremely serious. Fugitives in Berlin told terrible stories of the Russian advance in East Prussia. It was clear that a regular panic prevailed.

One afternoon I was rung up by Headquarters in Coblenz. It was urgent. A general Staff-officer whom I knew, gave me instructions on behalf of my husband to be at the Tiergarten Station at eight o'clock next morning. Ludendorff would be passing through Berlin on his way to the Eastern Front with the newly nominated Commander-in-Chief. The present leaders on that front had been recalled.

My heart was heavy and I was ill at ease. Ludendorff had emerged from Liège without a scratch and now he was to be transferred to a position of extreme danger. He was to repair the damage done by others. I knew the enormous, almost overwhelming, superiority in numbers of the Russians. How could we with our inferior forces set East Prussia free and hurl them back ?

The more I pondered, the greater grew my anxiety. I prayed to God once again to avert disaster and grant my husband the strength to secure a favourable issue.

The enemy reports proclaimed in triumph that the Russian steam-roller was now on its way to Berlin.



E. N. A.

THREE YEARS OLD



E. N. A.

AS A CADET AT PLOEN IN 1877

Next morning I stood impatiently on the platform and waited for the special train. I had come much too early, my anxiety having driven me out of the house. Finally, the train came in. A door was opened. I was pulled inside and away went the train towards the East. It consisted of only three or four carriages. One carriage with a sleeping and living room was reserved for Hindenburg and the second with the same accommodation for Ludendorff. In the third was a large apartment for general use in which men worked and took their meals.

I remained alone with my husband for an hour. After long and anxious days that was our first reunion since we had parted in Strasbourg.

It was then I heard for the first time how everything had turned out and that my son Heinz had been at Liège. "I wrote to you before the attack on Namur," continued Ludendorff. "I was on my way there when a motor overtook me and recalled me to Headquarters at Coblenz." The journey back was done at furious speed, and in it they passed countless numbers of troops and columns on the march. Among them was the Infantry Regiment, No. 31, in which my son Heinz was going as an ensign to the Front.

What a strange meeting between father and son in the enemy's country ! One on his way to

Russia, the other to France. Both with new tasks before them, the one bearing the responsibility of a whole people, the other on his way to his humble duties and yet ready to give his life and put all his strength into his work. Forced marches of from forty to fifty kilometres a day with a rifle on his shoulder and a loaded pack was no light matter for a young fellow who was but seventeen years old.

Added to all this there were hunger and thirst and an unbearable heat. They earned, but could seldom enjoy, the relaxation of refreshing sleep, since by night the exhausted troops were hurried forward on lorries. Forward ! forward ! unceasingly came the order.

In Coblenz Ludendorff was eagerly awaited and welcomed enthusiastically. He was congratulated on all sides on his success at Liège and with his own hands the Kaiser hung the Order of Merit round his neck.

It was here that he first heard how things stood in the East, that the position was very serious, that it was a question of averting incalculable losses and that a change must be brought about there with all possible speed. General von Hindenburg had been selected in place of the General who had been recalled, and Ludendorff as his Chief of Staff.

The orders of the Kaiser had reached Hindenburg simultaneously and at eight o'clock in the evening Ludendorff left Headquarters in a special train to pick up his new chief in Hanover.

Here the two generals met for the first time. I only mention this because after Tannenburg it was said that on receiving the summons Hindenburg had exclaimed : " I can only do it with Ludendorff." Many maintained that it had been the other way round and that Ludendorff had claimed in his abrupt impetuous way, that no one appreciated the Russian situation and the Russian character so well as he did. There were representatives of the Press who took this view, but needless to say it was quite incorrect. For the Kaiser to give an order and for two generals to impose conditions was a manifest impossibility. Everyone must surely know that.

It was about nine o'clock that we went into the saloon to have breakfast with General von Hindenburg. He came to meet me with a touch of real friendliness and greeted me kindly. At that time he had not reached his position of mighty war-lord and conqueror at whose triumphs all rejoiced, but he none the less made a deep impression on me. Now after all these years, I realize all the loyalty and reliability, all the kindness and knowledge of human nature which

was mirrored in his countenance. From the first moment I saw him my heart went out to him in confidence and admiration.

We sat down at the tea table and Hindenburg began to talk calmly and almost cheerfully : " In Hanover I have been waiting in a state of inactivity and have followed our battles and victories in the West with satisfaction. On the other hand, the situation in the East caused me the gravest anxiety and I considered the Russian advance extremely disquieting. I could scarcely wait for the time when I should be there and be able to dedicate my services to the Fatherland. I could not get the thought out of my head—to be there to help to take a hand—and my hopes and desires were fulfilled sooner than I had expected. My summons found me quite unprepared."

" Look," he finished by saying, " my uniform and boots are not according to the regulations, and I have had to go to the Front with my old Litewka from the Third Guards Regiment."

While the conversation went on my eyes kept wandering to the window. The special train at a tearing speed passed a chain of munition trucks and transports, which were all going eastwards.

The carriages were decked with flowers and

from every window the fresh smiling faces of our soldiers looked out.

They were packed close together and I heard the sounds of clear laughter and cheerful singing : everywhere there was a lively satisfaction at being able to take part. My impressions of the scene were so strange and new, that the whole thing seemed a dream.

When we reached Küstrin I had to take my leave. I was handed over to the care of the station commandant. Owing to the heavy transference of troops from West to East it was several hours before I could start my homeward journey. So I sat in the station at Küstrin and let my thoughts stray.

I had no idea then of the historic hours which lay behind me. Even in my wildest hopes I never dreamed that soon after the arrival of Hindenburg and Ludendorff in Marienwerder one of the greatest battles would be fought and one of the mightiest victories in the history of the world achieved. I little thought that in General von Hindenburg, with whom I had just had a friendly talk and breakfast, would emerge the saviour and national hero of Germany.

The old station commandant of Küstrin had no small knowledge of human nature. He felt that my heart was heavy and that I must have

time to collect myself. He tactfully left me alone and did not come with his officers until later.

He belonged to a Battalion of the Landsturm and was himself owner of an estate.

He told me proudly how his sons and sons-in-law had been officers at the Front since the outbreak of war—how gradually all his labourers had been called up and how finally the summons came for his good old bailiff. How could he stop at home as the only remaining member of the male sex. His old soldier's blood would not endure it. He had said to his wife : "Mother, even if I am sixty years old, I've no choice, I must go. You look after the property. I cannot stay any longer. I must be off."

They received him with great joy and at once made him station commandant of Küstrin, a highly responsible position.

I was given a reserved compartment and started in deep dejection on a return journey which seemed interminable. It took about ten hours to go the short distance to Berlin. Again and again transport trains rolled by me. Men, horses, cannons and war material of every kind—everything streamed by unceasingly to the Russian Front.

Travel-stained and exhausted I at length regained the hospice with but one desire, to lie down and sleep deeply. My nerves were on edge.

But the great day was to have a harmless, almost comic conclusion. When I was in the bathroom there was a knock. A lady whom I knew asked if she could speak to me for a few minutes. "Certainly," I said, "if you will wait until I've had my bath." When she came I could see at once that she was excited and very anxious. "I have missed you and looked for you the whole day long," she began, and went on to ask: "Where in the world had you really hidden yourself?" Without waiting for my reply she went on excitedly: "Hasn't your husband told you about the position in the East? Of what is going to be done and what our plans are? The reports are most alarming and I'm simply terrified. It simply cannot go on like this. One simply cannot tell the difference between truth and fairy-tales. But I am so anxious that I cannot bear this uncertainty any longer and to-morrow I mean to go to Hanover and have a talk with my brother-in-law, Paul Hindenburg." I let her talk herself out and said to her with elaborate indifference: "You can spare yourself the trouble of a journey to Hanover. Your brother-in-law isn't there." "How do you know where my brother-in-law is?" she went on. I let her rattle on and remained calm. "By all means go to Hanover, I wish you

a pleasant journey, but you won't find him there." She stared at me in astonishment. I did not want to torture her any longer and told her my experiences. Her distorted features assumed a look of indescribable repose, followed by an expression of great satisfaction, when she heard that the destiny of Germany lay in the faithful hands of her brother-in-law. I could not have told her anything which could please her better.

She whispered tearfully : " Thanks and praise to God for sending us both these men in this dreadful emergency and with His blessing may all go well."

CHAPTER XIII

IN the Westens Hospice a retired general had taken rooms. He had volunteered on the outbreak of war and been given a post on the Home Front in Berlin. He was a kind and rather elderly man with a chivalrous character that won one's heart. He often spoke with pride of his son who had served as air-lieutenant since the first day of mobilization and been ordered to the Austrian army on the Russian Front. At that time to be an airman was something rather special !

One day I found the general in the hall of the hospice, completely broke down. He was leaning against the wall as white as chalk and stared at me with big eyes full of terror. It was clear that his thoughts were far away. With an effort he pulled himself together and said a few words of apology. Then again he lost all self-control and in a voice shaken by terrible sobs he confided to me his trouble. His son's machine had developed a defect over the enemy's lines, he had been compelled to land, and been taken prisoner by the Russians.

The Austrians had given him an unserviceable machine, the weather was unfavourable, and worst of all his aeroplane was so loaded with propaganda leaflets that both he and his observer were seriously perturbed, and had only undertaken the flight with inward misgivings. They had scarcely risen and were over the Russian Front when the motor gave out. They were fired at and hit several times. It was too much for their ancient machine to resist. They had to descend and landed rather uncomfortably amid a horde of Cossacks.

In a moment they were surrounded and examined with expert thoroughness. The Russians were highly annoyed at the mass of propaganda and both airmen were taken to prison instead of to a camp for prisoners of war. On the next day they were brought before a court martial and sentenced to death by hanging.

That was the extent of the first report. I listened in silence to the sad news and I felt for him. No words of comfort or encouragement could do much to help him. I was thoroughly alarmed as it was in the very first days of the war when we had not yet accustomed ourselves to its horror and terror. As time went on we learned to suffer and endure. Telling his story had done the old general good. He had relieved

his soul of its burden by speaking of it. Soon afterwards he received more favourable news. The flying officers had been several times before a court martial and finally their sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. The old father breathed again. Horrible though the punishment was, his son was still among the living, and could be saved.

Nonetheless the fate of the young air-lieutenant was terrible enough in all conscience. He and his colleague were sent from prison to prison throughout Russia and finally into the depths of Siberia. The observer, who was young and pampered and had a delicate constitution, could not endure these hardships. He suffered unspeakably from the cold, the dirt and the vermin, and his enfeebled frame soon succumbed. He was the only son of his mother. The son of the general was now alone and dependent on his own efforts. He was sent further and further away, from base to base and finally to Manchuria. All his attempts to escape failed. Finally just before the outbreak of the Russian revolution, he succeeded by bribing right and left, after the most elaborate preparations, in reaching home. He later wrote a book of his experiences entitled *Among Cavaliers and Convicts*—a thrilling volume which shows the smart Prussian lieutenant of the

Empire at his best. Even in prison clothes he never lost his courage and self-confidence. He was deeply and sincerely convinced of the dignity of his lot.

They were all like that, these young lieutenants, full of the joy of life, though in their adolescence they were so often caricatured as "peace-time lieutenants."

In war they hurled themselves recklessly at the foe and went to a death which they took for granted. None of them knew what fear or danger meant and numbers of the best of them died the deaths of heroes for their country's sake.

Later on the old general, like Quartermaster-General von Stein, was a victim of the "spy mania." He happened to be on duty in a small market town, when the notice of one of our victories was posted up. A group of labourers were standing in front of the special edition and the general joined them full of enthusiasm. Immersed in the news he suddenly felt himself gripped by strong hands, and realized by the vigorous epithets hurled at him that they took him for a spy—because a real general would not be standing amongst labourers. Only his readiness to go to the Town Hall and prove his identity saved him from further trouble.

That was the second time that an inmate of our

hospice was arrested and rigorously examined. General von Stein felt that in consequence I ought to have a certificate of identity, photograph and all. I badly wanted one as I had no papers of any sort. Now I was secure.

In the first weeks of the war when members of all classes were called to the colours, the wife of a well-known civil servant came to one of the barracks in Berlin to see her husband, who had been called up as a Territorial though hitherto excused.

She asked the sentry : " How can I find the Privy Councillor (we will call him) Kulicke ? " The sentry replied : " Privy Councillor Kulicke ? What ? we haven't any of them here—you must mean the Territorial Kulicke ? " He shouted through the window into the barrack-room : " You, Kulicke, you must come out a minute—your best girl is here." The Privy Councillor came out in a woman's apron of blue print. He was just peeling the potatoes.

On another occasion a relation of Ludendorff's was concerned : he had the same name and had been called up as a Territorial.

Looking very little like a soldier he passed the barrier of the Potsdam Station in Berlin, clad in his private's uniform—a coat with numerous repairs—five articles of uniform, a forage cap,

much the worse for wear, and above the low collar his neck stuck yards out. He was a grotesque figure. The serjeant at the barrier inspected his papers, "Ludendorff? Ludendorff? Are you related to the general."

The answer was : "Yes, serjeant, of course."

"Young fellow, you look it," was the rejoinder.

CHAPTER XIV

HINDENBURG and Ludendorff had taken over the old staff of the upper Eastern Front. Among the officers, Colonel Hoffman and several General-Staff officers had previously belonged to our old second section. They told me how General von Prittwitz had promised in vain to go out and meet the Russians instead of always retiring a little further into Germany. Owing to the general's lack of enterprise, no progress could be made, and they were almost in despair. At the news of the appointment of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the depression of officers and men vanished, and they set to work with fresh enthusiasm.

A few days after the new commanders had taken up their duties, the battle of Tannenberg was fought. The German homeland was liberated from the Russian yoke at one blow, and East Prussia cleared of the enemy. The Russian steam-roller was held up on its path to Berlin.

I shall never forget the joy and happiness which the news of the Russian defeat let loose in our country. The names of Hindenburg and Ludendorff were on the lips of all.

I received optimistic letters from my husband. He himself could scarcely grasp that in so short a time a battle had been fought which resulted in this decisive shattering victory.

Men shuddered at the picture of the fate which would have befallen us if the Russians had continued their progress, and Rennenkampf had been able at the decisive moment to produce his reinforcements.

On the day before the victory, Hindenburg and Ludendorff drove out to visit the battlefield. Suddenly a crowd of German fugitives streamed round his car, and from them he heard shouts of terror: "The Russians are coming, there they are."

It was a fact that in the distance an endless procession of Russians could be descried. The mistake was soon cleared up. They really were Russians, but prisoners, instead of combatants, who had been collected to be sent to the rear.

From one of the captured Russian generals a mass of silver and valuable articles which he had looted in East Prussia under pretext of requisition, was removed. Amongst them was a bronze statue, which the Commandant of Kovno later handed to Ludendorff. It represented an officer of the Fusilier Regiment, No. 39, at the storming

of the heights of Spichenen. It was Ludendorff's only piece of loot during the World-War.

Later on, Headquarters were removed from East Prussia to Silesia. Hindenburg's entry into Breslau was like a triumphant procession. Ludendorff had gone there in haste and sent for me to come, and again we had a few scanty hours to ourselves.

There was an Austrian General Staff officer there, attached to Headquarters, whom Hindenburg had entrusted with important duties and sent to Vienna for fresh instructions. Ludendorff was most anxious to learn the result of the discussion, and ordered the envoy to report to him immediately on his return.

We were actually at table when he appeared. He could not, however, succeed in unburdening himself of his report. The Austrian was a regular type of Viennese, a charming man who took life very easily, and could not get the thoughts of his native city out of his head. He could talk of nothing but Vienna, and all the lovely women whom he had seen again, and he was visibly delighted to find himself once more in good society, and at a table with a white cloth decked with flowers and glittering with glass and silver. He made pleasant conversation, and was clearly glad not to have to think of the war for once.

Unfortunately, Ludendorff interrupted him continually with his questions.

When Hindenburg arrived with all his staff of officers, the Hotel Metropole filled up in a trice with a crowd of busy, hurrying men, officers, their orderlies, and their servants; all were in a great hurry and eager for their work. Among the crowd were many post-office officials, and within three hours, thirty different telephone exchanges had to be installed.

Outside in the streets stood a dense crowd of cheering and enthusiastic people. The national hymn was sung, and "Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles." Again and again Hindenburg and Ludendorff were called for. They could not show themselves often enough and were made a perfect target for flowers.

There followed a pleasant gathering at the tea-table. A colonel gave me several small photographs from Insterburg, showing the Grand Duke, Nikolaus Nikolajewitsch, taking part in a parade of Russian troops.

In the course of the afternoon, Frau Hoffmann, with her little daughter and Hindenburg's sister-in-law, arrived, but Frau von Hindenburg did not come. Soon after our tea-party, the men returned to their labours, which continued till midnight.

I only had a chance of talking to Ludendorff

during the short periods when he took his meals, or when weary and utterly exhausted, he came to our room to lie down and sleep. During the war he never took a holiday. Our meetings never lasted longer than a few days or hours, and I had always to be ready to leave on receiving his summons.

In the early part of the year 1915 I was in Strasbourg to look after our flat. A telegram from Ludendorff arrived saying that he would expect me at ten o'clock the next evening in Thorn. This could only be done if everything went like clockwork, and no unforeseen obstacle arose : this was hardly possible, amid the constant movement of troops, least of all at that time, just before Whitsun with so many men coming on leave from the Front.

The military governor of Strasbourg gave my preparations his personal attention and accompanied me to the station. It was just as difficult a matter to leave a fortress as it was to enter one.

According to my programme I reached Berlin next morning and continued my journey at midday. The train crawled along at a snail's pace, but the hours went by at break-neck speed. Every moment I became more anxious and finally reached Thorn, where my husband was waiting for me with the same impatience. His car had

had a breakdown on the way. With an angry gleam in his eye he exclaimed, "I should have had that chauffeur hanged if I had not got here in time to meet you at the station."

We had our evening meal and entered the special train which had been got ready. We travelled through the night and came next morning to Kattowitz, in Upper Silesia, where Ludendorff was greeted by the President of the railway. He only waited there a few minutes as he had been ordered by the Kaiser to attend a conference at Pless.

I remained in Kattowitz. Here there were many Austrian troops. Caked with mud, they came in from the trenches, and waited to continue their journey. Among them were many Hussars, and they made a fascinating, many-coloured picture in their bright uniforms.

It was six o'clock in the evening before Ludendorff returned to Kattowitz, and we set out at once on our return journey to Lötzen.

Next morning we stood at the window of our carriage and looked out on the green plains and waving cornfields of East Prussia. Everything was in order as far as the eye could reach, the damage had been repaired and it looked as though the land had never been trodden beneath the foeman's foot. It seemed scarcely possible that

a short time before, hordes of Cossacks, plundering and burning, had dwelt in our land.

Once again I had a sad parting and a lonely journey back. Already I had abandoned all hopes of an early ending to the war.

In Strasbourg I found great difficulty in entering the town as I had failed to inform the Commandant of my arrival in time.

In those days of famous battles and victories, I often experienced a little reflected glory. I was the object of many a curious glance, but I sometimes failed to live up to expectations.

In this way the little daughter of one of my acquaintances found me terribly disappointing. I was there at tea, with some other ladies, and the children came in to say how-do-you-do. The lady of the house took her youngest daughter by the arm and said, pointing to me, "Look, that is the wife of General Ludendorff." The child stared at me with wide-open eyes. "Oh, that's what you are like, and I thought you would wear a little golden crown."

I often disappointed grown-up people. There was a lady, for instance, who confessed that she had always thought of me as large and fat, because the name of Ludendorff involuntarily aroused that sort of picture in her mind. With a name like that, one must be large and stout, like a stove.

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE passing out of his cadet college, my son Franz had already in secret ordered his officer's uniform. Everything was ready, even to the number of his regiment. One day my sister-in-law, Gertrud Jahn, happened to be with me when the door opened suddenly and my boy stood there as a brand-new lieutenant. "I've no time, Mother," he exclaimed, "but I wanted to tell you, pressed though I am for time, that I have passed out and been promoted to lieutenant." Now I had to look at him as he wanted to present himself in all his glory. He was proud of the 39 which he bore on his shoulder-straps, the number of our dear old Fusilier Regiment.

The words came tumbling from his lips, in pure joy he kissed and fondled us alternately and said again and again, "Mother, do look at me once more. I'm no longer a cadet, but a lieutenant of Royal Prussia."

The words which I have set down are certainly simple, but what a mother feels when she sees her child so happy cannot be put into language.

Two days later my son took his leave and left to join his regiment at Düsseldorf, where he spent five weeks in a training battalion before going to the Front. He longed to go straight to the Front and the five-weeks' delay seemed endless to him.

My youngest son also had very little time longer in his Cadet Corps in Lichterfelde. He was promoted to ensign in Infantry Regiment, No. 64, and left for his garrison. And now all my sons had joined the colours. I tried to tell myself that in the case of the youngest, it must be months before he went to the Front as a lieutenant. As he was in Prenzlau, which is close to Berlin, I hoped to see him often. My hopes were not fulfilled. I only saw him once more prior to his departure for the Western Front.

In six weeks he had become a senior ensign, and already instead of a rifle he wore the sword of an officer. He never possessed the naïve light-heartedness of his eldest brother. His features were clouded by a deep seriousness, and he was convinced that it simply had to be . . . there was no alternative for him, a boy of sixteen, but to take part in his country's struggle.

The departure was an inspiring sight. From all the regiments which belonged to the Third

Corps, a flood of soldiers had streamed in. Helmets and rifles were decked with flowers and everyone had a parcel from home as the last token of affection. The band played as the train drew out, handkerchiefs waved. It was gone.

Now I had given everything and had nothing left. I did not weep, but I must have worn a look of desperate misery, because I suddenly felt someone grasp my hand and press it warmly. A simple woman of the people, quite a stranger, stood near me, looked at me in deepest sympathy, and said softly, "God will protect your child for you."

I never saw my son Heinz again before his departure. After I returned to Berlin I had no other chance of making my way to Hamburg. I tried, without success, to speak to him on the telephone.

To-day I still shudder when I look back on that heavy time.

On my return from Brandenburg I sat in my carriage with a lady who had just accompanied her son to the station. She told me what it was like in the East before the beginning of the war. Her husband was a landowner, near Ostrovo, which to-day belongs to Poland. As far back as the middle of July they had noticed formidable masses of Russian troops on the frontier, and

their enquiries had been met by evasive replies. They were told that great manœuvres of on importance in themselves were in progress. "We did not believe it," she added, "we were under no illusions as to our danger, and we made preparations in deepest secrecy, against a surprise attack." I heard a similiar story from a lady who came from East Prussia, save that in her case it was even more unpleasant. Her husband had to go at once to the Front as an officer of the reserve and his young wife had to face the terrible possibilities of a Russian invasion alone. All her servants left her, her only support was an old bailiff. She remained bravely at her post because the peasants and common people came in crowds and besought her not to desert them in their need. She did not leave her home until everything had been satisfactorily arranged. Soon after her departure the Russians arrived, the castle of her forefathers was razed to the ground, corn and meadow-land were laid waste. She bore it all and wretched though she was, seemed resigned to her fate.

CHAPTER XVI

MY eldest son. . . .
I don't know how to begin my task of giving a really life-like portrait of my eldest son. Perhaps my best way would be to give you the keynote of his character—his sunny cheerfulness. There was something triumphant about it which won him all hearts, and from his childhood onwards he possessed this touch of radiance.

He joined the Cadet Corps at Bensberg, when only ten years old, at his own request. This institution was housed in an old shooting-box of the Elector of the Palatinate, which was perched on a hill and provided a glorious view of the Rhine valley. In the background rose the towers of Cologne Cathedral.

Those first days in the Corps cannot have been easy for the little fellow, since he must have found himself in the grip of a severe system of military discipline. He never complained, though he often suffered from homesickness. Only once was his sorrow at leaving us greater than his self-control. When we parted after the long

summer holidays he held his arms fast round my neck and could not restrain his tears.

Among his comrades he had the reputation of an eager daring boy who was ready to take the lead at a moment's notice and took it for granted that his orders would be obeyed. I could, however, recognize in him the destructive influence which can be caused by an error in training.

He had disobeyed an order of his captain. This entailed not merely a severe punishment, which was right and proper, but the disapproval of his superior officer which lasted two years. His teachers gave him favourable reports on his studies, but for conduct he always received a black mark. When I mentioned it to him he replied pathetically, "Believe me, Mother, I do everything I can but the captain has a down on me. However much I try it's all no use."

When the captain was transferred his troubles were over. There were no more black marks for conduct—on the contrary Franz was prefect of his room.

Only if one has once lived the life of a cadet can one appreciate the dignity and authority which lie in the word "prefect of his room."

On "him" is laid the responsibility for the twelve or fifteen comrades who are his room-mates. He has to see that they go on parade

properly dressed and with polished buttons. He has to see that silence reigns in the hours set aside for preparation, that work is really done and order kept. One stern look from the prefect of the room, and his young flock obey.

My boy was very small and had tall fellows under him. He told me with a smile : " There are two of them in my room whose ears I can only box by getting on a ladder."

On one of our walks a little girl met us with her mother. The admiring gaze of the child was fixed on the tiny fellow in his uniform. " Look, look, Mother, at the little postman." The shot went home. He gave his admirer a savage look and with an air of boundless contempt, exclaimed, " This idiotic urchin can't even distinguish a Royal Prussian cadet from a postman."

He was still more annoyed when two ladies met him on a journey and addressed him as " Piccolo." This was shortly before his ensign's examination. The limit of his patience was reached. He drew himself up to his full height and said harshly : " I must really request you."

At the chief cadet school at Lichterfelde, near Berlin, he won the Kaiser's prize for diligence and soldierly smartness. Both by training and inclination Franz had a tendency to scrupulous order. When he joined his regiment he examined

the quarters assigned to him which another lieutenant, now at the Front, had occupied. Franz was horrified to find in a drawer a packet of hundred and thousand mark notes which had been carelessly thrown away. Along with them he found the following message. "On all important occasions such as Christmas Day and my birthday, my relations gave me substantial tips which my guardians removed and invested. I had money and got nothing out of it. I envied every poor child who has a couple of pfennigs and can buy something for himself with them. If I do not return from the Front I wish and ordain by these presents, that my property shall pass to my nephews and nieces and that until their majority they shall on Christmas Day and on their birthdays receive intact such portions thereof as may enable them to purchase what their hearts desire."

In the beginning of September 1914 my son went to the Front and as early as the fourteenth of that month near Bouconville, a splinter from a grenade injured his skull. The news arrived first in Düsseldorf and aroused universal sympathy. A lady undertook the thankless task of breaking it to me with great care and tact. She wrote of him as being slightly wounded, but when I saw my son again he was in a terrible state. He was

lying in the clinic of a professor who was a specialist in operations on the head. I passed several agonizing weeks as he was so badly wounded that I could not see him. Only out of pure kindness of heart did they once open the door for a few seconds and let me peep inside. I looked in the corner of the room by the glimmer of a night-light and saw a head so heavily swathed that I could not recognize the features. The arm lay motionless, as the paralysis which comes from wounds like these, had supervened. The professor held out no hope: it was one of the most dangerous wounds which he had ever had under his care. My boy hovered for weeks between life and death. The doctor, the matron and the sisters wrestled with death for his young life. "No," they said, "we won't give this one up—not this one."

When he was convalescent I was able to tell him that he had been recommended for the Iron Cross. He refused to believe it. "Oh, Mother, you tell me this now and afterwards if it's a mistake, I shall be very disappointed." A few days afterwards I was able to put the Cross on his bed. He was radiantly happy. He had won the seventh Iron Cross which had been granted by his regiment or even by his brigade.

In September 1914 that was no small distinc-

tion. Ludendorff received it for the battle of Tannenburg, but then he had already obtained the Order of Merit. It was the battle in the Masurian Lakes which brought him the Iron Cross of the first class.

After his convalescence my son was found to be unfit for service in the infantry. He worried Ludendorff until he had him transferred to the Flying Corps.

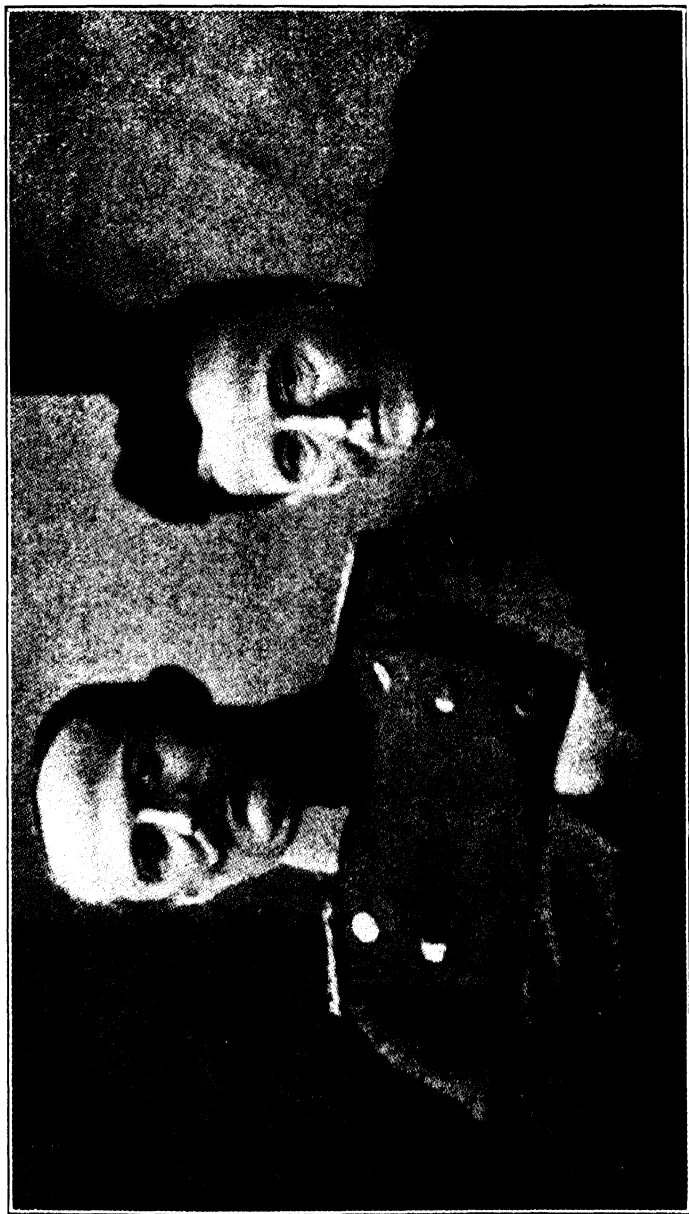
He was detailed to the Air Division in Posen and soon passed his examinations both as observer and pilot. I visited him twice in Posen and he took me round the whole town. I had never been in the East and was astonished at the Polish notices in the shops, posters and street names. Even the newspaper advertisements were written in Polish. I attended a magnificent celebration of the Mass in a marvellous Polish church and was very much impressed by the pictures of the saints, the incense and the ceremony.

My son was soon afterwards moved to the flying division at Subaton, the Eastern Front, to which my son Heinz was later attached. For some time they were all three together at Kovno aerodrome, the two younger ones having followed their brother's example and taken up flying. They often visited Ludendorff at Headquarters

and were allowed to take part in the social life of the Field-Marshal who was always a kind friend to the boys. I think those must have been the happiest hours of their lives. The victories of Hindenburg and Ludendorff woke a joyous echo in their hearts. It was then that Fate struck me a second cruel blow. New machines had been built and my son received instructions to carry out a reconnaissance over the Russian Front in one of these. He was scarcely above the enemy's lines when he felt that something substantial had given way and saw in the observer's mirror that the struts of the left wing had been broken. His presence of mind enabled him to bring his machine down on German territory. In it he "crashed" from a height of two thousand metres in a little coppice.

In those days all "crashes" were photographed, and the picture of this one is one of the most terrifying things that I know. My son was dragged unconscious from the ruins. He had sustained concussion of the brain, a complicated fracture of the hip and serious bruises. His hospital was in occupied enemy territory and he had to undergo a period of severe suffering. But he never lost heart. The dreadful thing about it for me was that I could not visit him.

Half an hour after his disastrous flight a tele-



GENERAL LUDENDORFF PHOTOGRAPHED WITH HIS MOTHER

E.N.A.

gram arrived from the War Office in Berlin to the effect that the newly delivered machines must not be flown as they had a defect in their construction. The warning came too late. My son was already on a stretcher. With a laugh he repelled our sympathy. "Now I must hurry up and get married as I shall never get a wife if I break any more of my bones."

After his convalescence he obstinately refused all light duty, including posts as adjutant in the army of the German Crown Prince and in that of General Hoffman, and begged to be allowed to remain with his old flying division. He considered it indecent to worm himself into a sheltered job owing to his crash.

He admitted to General Hoffman what he had never confessed to me, that before his first flight he was terrified.

His greatest wish was to join Bolckes' squadron as a flying officer. He succeeded in doing so, but how on earth he managed it I do not know.

And now began nerve-racking months for him and for me. From dawn to dusk our flying men lay waiting at their posts opposite the English, and as soon as an enemy squadron was sighted or signalled they took to the air. Nearly every day there were twelve air-flights or more against a numerical superiority of nearly always

two and quite often three English to one German machine. In one of his last letters my son wrote to me : " Mother, you cannot imagine what a heavenly feeling it is when all the day's fighting is successfully over, to lie down in bed and say to oneself before going to sleep, ' Thank God ! you have another twelve hours to live.' The certainty of the thing is so pleasant."

At the end of August 1917, two of his dearest friends were killed. I got his last letter when he himself was no longer alive, and in it he told me how he found the deaths of his friends harder to bear than anything else. He had just carved a cross for the grave of one more of them.

On the fifth of September, the birthday of my son Heinz, Franz was shot down by the English and fell into the sea without it being possible to save him.

I received the news on September 7th, in Baden-Baden. Ludendorff was coming to see me, I was told, and I hastened to meet him, with surprise and delight. He looked, however, so sad and serious that I stood aghast. He could only get out a few words, " The boy, the child." I completed the sentence for him " Is dead." I must have screamed out aloud as the sound still rings in my ears and I often seem to live through the whole thing in a dream.

I had always believed that God had twice preserved my son from death and given him back to me with a view to letting me keep him. I had consciously buoyed myself up with this thought, in order to numb my torturing anxiety, and now I had lost him.

I left Baden-Baden at once. I could not remain there where everything recalled him to me. The whole air was filled with his sunny presence. I received from Field-Marshal von Hindenburg a letter of sympathy which moved me deeply.

“ General Headquarters,

“ September 8th, 1917.

“ MY MOST HONOURED AND GRACIOUS LADY !

“ I cannot write much, but I feel I must be amongst those who assure you of their deepest sympathy in the terrible loss which the unfathomable will of God has laid upon you and yours.

“ I have so often been cheered by the brightness and charm of your dear son that I feel I have the right to tell you how warmly I sympathize with you. God comfort you, and grant His blessing and peace to the young hero who has gone, whose memory I shall always treasure.

“ I kiss your hand in token of respect and associate myself with your grief.

“ VON HINDENBURG.”

Ludendorff had told me that my son had fallen behind the enemy's lines. It was only when I earnestly desired to recover his body that I learnt that it had fallen into the sea. Sometime afterwards it was washed up on the small Dutch island of Wissekerke and buried there. I heard this through the German military attaché who arranged for its transport and accompanied the coffin to the German frontier. Flying officers and comrades of his regiment met it at Wesel and formed a guard of honour to Berlin. There he was interred and that was the terrible ending to a terrible tragedy. In spite of all our precautions, we did not succeed in keeping secret the day and hour of the funeral. A dense crowd assembled and the streets had to be cleared by numerous police to make a lane for the funeral procession. At the cemetery the guard of honour was composed of airmen. A volley was fired and high up in the air a squadron of airmen circled above his grave.

It was an imposing ceremony, but at the moment when the coffin was laid in the earth, the crowd pressed through the barrier and we became the target of countless photographers who took aim at us without reserve.

Police and soldiers cleared a path for us between two walls of men, and I collapsed completely exhausted in my car.

CHAPTER XVII

WHEN I came to Strasbourg in 1917 I lived at the Hotel Furstenhof, in which the staff of Falkenhausen were quartered. I was the only woman among all the officers, most of whom I knew. Among them was a captain, who later commanded an infantry battalion as major, and distinguished himself in many battles with his regiment. I became friends with his wife and we spent much time in Baden-Baden together.

While his battalion was in rest-billets on the Vosges, two smart young N.C.O.'s suddenly appeared bearing a bunch of wild-flowers of unusual size and beauty along with a short message from the major. The N.C.O.'s and men had utilized their leisure in picking flowers in my honour and besought me to be the god-mother of their regiment. I gladly acceded to their request and from that time onwards provided the battalion with cigarettes.

From time to time I received an illuminated address with a cheerful little poem. The com-

poser, who was at once the poet and painter, voiced the general gratitude for my packets of cigarettes, but by the irony of fate, although he was chosen to express by brush and pen the thanks of the battalion, it was calculated that he was the only non-smoker among them.

My circle of acquaintances in Baden-Baden was very large. Among others I saw a great deal of a young Countess, the daughter of a former Secretary of State for Alsace-Lorraine, who had lived a long time in that country. She was kind and sympathetic and had a piquant charm of her own. What distressed me about her was a love for France which she could not help expressing. After the visit of some young Turks she said : " Now I have lived again. We have spent the whole day talking French." I could not restrain my feelings. " But, Countess Anne-Marie, how can you talk like that ? " " What can you expect," she said with a touch of sadness. " I am the victim of unfortunate circumstances. How could anyone expect my sympathies to be purely German ? My grandfather was chamberlain to the Empress Eugénie of France and my father fought against Germany in 1870. He was even taken prisoner by the Germans. None the less, on the conclusion of peace, he entered the German service. Still, race is race,

and I cannot disavow my French blood, although I do really try to be a good German."

I was very fond of the cousin of the Countess. She always called me "Mrs. Field-Marshal." Her husband was in Rumania and she lived with her grandmother, a distinguished old lady, in Baden-Baden. The latter resembled a rococo miniature with her silver-white hair and tiny hands and feet. Like the old Grand Duchess, Louise of Baden, she only wore white or pearl-grey clothes. Her house was a veritable bower of roses, completely covered by them, and in her park the roses climbed high up on the tree-trunks. The old lady, like everything round her, had a style of her own. When she talked she used words in their real meaning, though her talk was full of grace and kindness. When I went there to tea I was always fascinated by her. She often took me into her park where flowers bloomed luxuriously on every side, while her gracious presence tripped beside me with her train over her arm.

In the morning she put on a large white apron and stood in the monastery of Lichtental where she assiduously managed the national kitchen. It was a pretty sight to see the old lady amongst all her young assistants, one of whom was my daughter Margot.

But I liked best of all to visit the Grand Duchess Louise. She did not receive me at her usual audiences. I was allowed to visit her alone. And she did not talk to me like a princess but as one human being to another. I had to tell her about Ludendorff and my boys, she wanted to know everything and took an interest in all I told her.

All the time the clear glance of her blue Hohenzollern eyes rested on me as though she wished to look right into my soul. I often thought that Frederick the Great must have had eyes like hers. When I came to say good-bye she took me in her arms and kissed me warmly. "Am I not right?" she said, "we can never be strangers again." She gave me a pretty tiny watch as a keepsake.

In spite of her great age the Grand Duchess regularly visited the wounded in the hospitals and bitterly complained that the doctors forbade her to act as a nurse. Her kindness and love for her countrymen were ill repaid in the revolution. Though eighty years of age, she had to leave her castle under the shadow of night and escape by the window.

When more peaceful times returned Schloss Mainau on an island in Lake Constance was assigned to her as a residence.

CHAPTER XVIII

I HAD come into touch with the Navy much earlier through the husband of my only sister. Her three daughters were also married to naval officers and her only son followed the family tradition by joining the service.

I paid my first visit to Kiel as a young married woman. My sister after a year and a half of married life was then for the first time a grass-widow, as my brother-in-law had gone in the *Cormorant* for a two and a half years' cruise to the Far East.

Kiel made a great impression on me. The season of the year was marvellously beautiful just about Whitsuntide. The Düsternbrook forest was decked with all the glory of spring, and the woods round the harbour were showing their first tender green. When the sun was mirrored in the clear blue waves or when at evening the moon shed its silver rays on the waters I was simply enraptured. It was at Kiel that my daughter first fell in love, while still a child, but it was with the whole of the German Navy.

She became the happy wife of a naval officer and has passed on her love of the sea without a doubt to her son, my nine-year-old grandson, Knut. When I asked him, "Do you really want to go into the Navy like your father?" he stood with legs apart and hands deep in his trouser pockets like a sailor and said with a shrug of the shoulders, "Of coourse." This was said with a real sailor's accent and with a tone of contempt which could only imply that no reasonable man would do otherwise.

During the war Kiel was at first a sorry sight. The English declaration of war, which no one had counted on or, at any rate, no one had wished to count on (according to Bethmann's policy), made a devastating impression. Fears of a naval battle were the bogey that bulked large in every eye.

Gradually this feeling of oppression lightened and gave way to a mood of victory when the heroic exploits of our Navy were known. The *Emden*, submarines 9 and 202, the *Ayesha*, the *Möwe*, and their captains, von Müller, Weddingen, von Mücke, Baron von Spiegel, Count Dohna. These were the names which passed from lip to lip.

Years passed before I saw Kiel again. After the battle of Skagerack I was there for some time. In the meantime my daughter had got engaged

and my son-in-law, as second artillery officer in the cruiser *Lutzow*, had taken part in the battle. With the surviving members of the crew he was transferred to the *Baden* which was re-commissioned for service and lay in Kiel harbour as the flagship of the admiral. Admiral Scheer and von Trotha were both on board.

Soon after my arrival Admiral Scheer sent a message through his adjutant inviting me to tea on board. A steam pinnace was placed at my disposal for my passage across the harbour and I was allowed to visit our latest and largest submarine. My afternoon on the *Baden* aroused my deepest interest. After seeing over the ship we had tea in the officers' mess and Admiral Scheer gave me an enthusiastic account of the Battle of Skagerack. He showed me the talisman which had certainly helped him to win the battle and had preserved his life. It consisted of leaves of four-leafed clover stuck on paper and corresponding in number and size to the members of his family.

It was on a walk shortly before the fleet put out to sea for this battle that Frau Scheer had found these leaves and taken them for a favourable omen.

The course of the battle is well-known so I will only tell the story of the last moments of the

Lutzow as I heard it from the lips of my son-in-law. The cruiser had sunk two English cruisers and in doing so had been hit several times. The armour-plate had been pierced and torn by shells in several places. The bow sank deeper and deeper so that the tubes of the forward gun-turret were already awash. The ship was clearly sinking and it was impossible to bring it to Wilhelmshaven. In order to prevent its falling into English hands it was decided to sink it.

The crew were transferred to torpedo-boats and after one well-aimed shot the *Lutzow* sank beneath the waves. Two enormous columns of fire leaped like sacrificial flames to heaven—a wonderful though terrible sight which deeply moved all the spectators and filled them with awe. This unusual spectacle was explained by the fact that there were a number of buoys on board containing magnesium which caught fire when the vessel was sunk.

Only two days after the fleet had left Wilhelmshaven, with officers and men full of hope and impatience to come to grips with the foe, it returned victorious. There was a procession of the survivors of the *Lutzow* through the streets of the town, and from ragged throats the jubilant song rang out “ ’Twas *Lutzow*’s daring headlong chase.”

When I visited submarine No. 202 I made the acquaintance of the captain, Baron von Spiegel. He was then making trial trips in Kiel harbour with his boat which had just come from the dock-yard.

It was the latest, largest type and destiny had meant it for his last as, shortly afterwards, he was taken prisoner by the English.

I also met Count Dohna soon after his return with his "private ship." The only one I never met was Captain von Mücke. I particularly regretted it as he was the missing-link in this chain of leading men whom I encountered. I followed with breathless interest the triumphant exploits of the *Emden*. I loved her and was very grieved when the special editions announced her loss.

A year ago, however, through my son-in-law, I added Captain von Mücke to my list of acquaintances. That filled in the gap and I had the pleasure of hearing his experiences from his own lips. He wrote for me on a card: "It is the achievement and not the fame of it that counts"—a fine sentence in keeping with his character.

The disputes in the Reichstag on the subject of unlimited submarine warfare ended in a victory for the Supreme Command.

When we heard of it we, that is all the wives of

the generals who lived together in the same Berlin pension, were so pleased that we went out and cleared the snow with shovels. It happened in this way. The manageress of the pension knew how earnestly we had desired this decision and made full use of our enthusiasm for the common weal. There had been a heavy snow-storm and workmen to clear it away could not be procured. Suddenly there appeared at the entrance to the dining-room a notice in the following terms : " Any person who is particularly pleased at unlimited submarine warfare will lend a hand this evening at clearing the snow away."

The labour was strenuous and of an unusual character, but with great devotion we all swept from nine to eleven o'clock that evening. Our street was as smooth and clean as if it had been polished, and in return for our fatiguing exertions we were regaled with cakes and hot punch. When the Berlin newspapers reported on the morrow that the wives of German generals had lent a hand in clearing the snow, people took it as a joke, whereas it had actually happened.

I have always had a great admiration for Admiral of the Fleet, von Tirpitz, who, with all the weight of his influence advocated the more energetic employment of our fleet and in particular the employment of our submarines in unlimited

warfare. After the war he often came to Munich and once, before the Hitler movement, he and his wife stayed with Doctor von Kahr, the Commissioner of the Bavarian State, when we met them at breakfast. He made a rousing speech on the new revival and renaissance of Germany, and as he spoke his eyes had an enraptured look which I shall remember as long as I live. It was as though he gazed into the distant future and saw Germany's glory rise again.

Tirpitz used also to visit our house. When he and Ludendorff had been elected to the Reichstag at the same time, he paid us his last visit, during which a long discussion took place between the two men. Tirpitz earnestly besought Ludendorff to avoid a breach even if he refused an alliance, between the German nationals and the People's party.

After the interview was over, the Admiral took me aside and begged me in moving words to second his efforts in the direction he desired, as it was for the good of the Fatherland.

Not long afterwards Ludendorff believed he had reason for attacking the German nationals. He went so far as to describe members of this party as a gang of perjured renegades. Naturally enough, Tirpitz was particularly wounded by this, and never set foot in our house again.

CHAPTER XIX

MY son Erich was tall and slender—far the best-looking of my boys. He was warmly attached to his small sister and she to him. He loved her with his heart and soul right up to his early death. I should have liked to keep my youngest boy at home, but my prayers were in vain. As both his brothers were in the Corps, he also wanted to be a cadet and become an officer. I could understand it as it was one of my favourite dreams to see Ludendorff and my three boys sitting round our table as officers. How differently everything turned out.

Even in his youth Erich was a serious-minded young fellow, with a strong sense of duty. His fault as a child was his obstinacy, but he kept it under when he became a cadet. His self-will developed into a punctilious strength of character, by which from that time onwards his life was regulated.

At school he was clever and very much alive, but took things very easily. He would refuse to make undue efforts. He and his brother, Heinz, passed through all their forms quite easily,

although, during the school year, their reports were always abominable. When I used to say with a sigh : “ But boys this is too terrible of you,” my eldest consoled me with a smile. “ Don’t excite yourself, Mother,” he would say, “ they have been already moved up. You must really know by this time that they will work the hardest when the first snow comes.”

And he was right—at Easter both my younger boys were moved up into their new form with their habitual cheerfulness and composure. Their mathematics saved them. “ Unsatisfactory ” in English was always compensated by “ Excellent ” in mathematics.

I have already told how Erich at sixteen went to the Front. He went out in September 1914, and shortly before Christmas became a lieutenant.

When he joined his regiment in France the Third Army Corps was engaged in a severe struggle in the neighbourhood of Soissons and Laon. For over a year he experienced the discomforts of trench warfare and drank the cup to the dregs.

The Brandenburger Corps had a special reputation for valour and reliability. For that reason they were sent to relieve the Bavarians, who for months on end had held a position on the heights

of Loretto and fought there with the courage of lions. It was a particularly dangerous section of the Front.

I trembled when my son told me of the change, but I knew he was under the protection of God. Whether here or there my son would either be preserved or surrender the flower of his young life according to the will of God. The whole Front was ablaze. Not to be behind his brother, Erich contrived, through the influence of a General Staff officer whom we knew intimately, to be transferred to the Flying Corps. He avoided approaching Ludendorff for this purpose. He did not wish to importune him with his private desires and was afraid that if he made the request it would be refused.

Thus it was that he faced us with the accomplished fact, that he had been transferred to the flying school of Grossenhain, in Saxony, and was soon to take his examination as a pilot. His comrades said of him, "That he flew a clean propeller." After that, he was for a long time on the Eastern Front and early in 1918 he came with his whole squadron to the West and was stationed near Sedan.

His last birthday in March 1918 was spent with me in Wiesbaden. He had three days' leave. He had spent four years unharmed in the

West and the East fighting on the ground and in the sky when he met his fate.

Our last days together were permeated by our feeling of how deeply we belonged to each other. Nothing that stirred his young soul was hidden from me, I possessed his complete confidence. Apart from his sister no one else had come into his life with whom this confidence was shared, and she also was a child whom I dearly loved.

On the last evening before he left we sat together in silence and my hand strayed tenderly over his hair. My boy must have felt the anxiety of my mother heart on his account for he suddenly broke our silence: "Mother mine, you mustn't be so sad. Remember that I love my profession with my whole heart and although I have gone through a good deal I wouldn't have missed a moment of this last year."

I pressed his hand but could not speak. He continued: "Do you know, I should like to achieve something entirely by my own efforts, and my highest ambition is some day to become a general like father. I'm always very hurt when I hear people whispering 'Naturally, he is Ludendorff's son.' I want to be recognized and respected for my own sake."

The next day he went to see Ludendorff at

Kreuznach and returned from there to the Front. The great spring offensive was beginning. My son took part in the air fights against the English and fell on the first day. The same evening I was called to the telephone. It was Headquarters speaking and my husband informed me that Erich had not returned from his flight.

I was alone in the room and had to learn of my son's death by telephone. I felt the full force of the blow. I do not know what happened. I only know that I collapsed and from that day onwards for years I was always sick and sorry.

My poor boy's body was not found until months afterwards. All enquiries proved fruitless until the Town Major of Nesles reported that the grave of two unknown airmen had been discovered in his zone, and near it the charred remains of a machine which had clearly been shot down. My husband went there at once and the grave was opened. One of the two bodies was that of my son. His slender young body could be recognized beneath the shroud in which the English had wrapped him. His features wore a look of peace and his hands were folded as though in prayer.

He was brought to Avesnes which was then Great-Headquarters, and buried amid laurels and a wealth of flowers. It was not until Ludendorff

was no longer Quartermaster-General and had ceased to be the faithful colleague and ally of Hindenburg that the body of my youngest boy was brought to Berlin and privately interred by his dead brother's side.

The days of my boy Erich were few ; but a tiny span of life was granted him, but he went his way swerving neither to right or left and his soul returned pure and undefiled to his Creator. It comforted me to think of the years of sorrow and disenchantment which he was spared, and it is my joy and pride to have had children like these.

CHAPTER XX

ALL the army leaders in the East and West were summoned to the first general conference at Cambrai. Ludendorff let me know that I could meet him when he passed through Frankfort and I travelled there from Baden-Baden.

The special train from the East with Hindenburg and Ludendorff and several General Staff officers arrived to the minute. I was told at our first greeting that I could only go with them a few minutes as far as Mainz. I exerted myself to gain a concession and received the friendly support of the Staff officers. They volunteered to arrange for me to go as far as Metz and to be admitted into the fortress without either passport or identity card. Ludendorff gave way in spite of his strict attitude in these matters.

It was a wonderful journey. I was at the very heart of the amazing machinery of the war, for it must not be imagined that the officers employed the journey for repose. They were still on duty. You cannot conceive of the perpetual stir and bustle which went on in the train. Reports,

orders and the allotment of troops had to be worked out in the train and sent off. Conferences took place and the officers were up to their eyes in work, bending over maps and papers.

In Mainz we had the first news of the fall of Tukratan. The campaign in Rumania had scarcely commenced and already a great victory had been won.

The Hughes patent was produced and set working and as the ribbon ticked round there appeared on it a complete report of the battle. It was next announced that nine thousand prisoners had been taken in Saarbrucken. The number rose to eighteen thousand, and on our arrival in Metz it had already reached twenty-two thousand.

A storm of cheers broke out at the station when the crowd recognized Hindenburg and Ludendorff. I thought there would be no end to the hurrahs and waving caps. Suddenly the sirens screamed their warning that French airmen were approaching. The crowd broke up. It was a slightly discordant note in our joyful mood, but it soon died away.

A General Staff officer of the Government of Metz met me on the train and furnished me with all the papers necessary for a three-days' sojourn in the fortress.

It was the first time I had been in Metz or

even in Lorraine, and what a wonderful mood for my visit ! The whole town was like a sea of flags and the waving pennons and oriflammes in the narrow street afforded a bright and varied spectacle of indescribable charm.

My first walk was to the esplanade, a noble square with flower-beds and a statue of the old Emperor William. I looked across the Moselle at the opposite bank which lay in bright sunshine—and apparently in the deepest peace. I was startled at the boom of guns. It seemed inconceivable that I should be standing there, as in time of peace, while bloody battles raged but a short distance away.

In the afternoon I visited the Cathedral where I was enthralled by its beauty and holy calm. I was quite alone. Life lay far remote from me, when from outside the music of a military band forced itself on my ears, and through the deserted arches rang the mighty echoes of “ Hold fast in the raging storm.”

My mood was interrupted and again I remembered our war and our victory. The world renewed its hold on me.

The adherence of Rumania to the Entente had aroused anxiety in all who understood its importance. Our new and overwhelming success gave us fresh courage and the firm conviction

that we should be able to deal effectively with our new antagonist and for quite a time all our spirits rose.

Three days later I left Metz, the richer by one delightful memory.

CHAPTER XXI

LATER arose a controversy as to whose fault it was that the battle of the Marne was lost.

The responsibility for the disaster was repudiated by General von Moltke and General von Bülow. General von Kluck felt himself seriously aggrieved by the reproach that his forced marches on Paris had destroyed the unity of the Front.

It is far from my intention to pass judgment on questions which it is the province of the war-historian to decide. I only desire to relate what I was told.

I have heard officers of the most widely different divisions and armies from every section of the Western Front discuss the Battle of the Marne and not one of them could understand why the fateful retirement was ordered.

They were all intensely surprised at the order to retreat. We were close to Paris, with the Eiffel Tower before our eyes and within an ace of our goal. We were bombarding the French capital and doing considerable damage. Of this fact the panic of the population and the flight of

Poincare, with his whole Government to Bordeaux, are sufficient evidence. And then came the disaster. I happened to be in Berlin in the hall of the Lokalanzeiger when, after all the news of victory, the fateful telegram was posted up, announcing that for tactical reasons a retirement had become necessary.

The very harmless character of this news accentuated the impression which it made on me.

I remember distinctly that I put my hand to my throat with a feeling of suffocation. I felt that something terrible had happened without being able to take in the real significance of what had occurred. Unfortunately my forebodings were justified.

It was a serious set back. Our Commander-in-Chief, General von Moltke, was so dumbfounded that he had to return home a sick and broken man. He was never the same again.

I only saw him once before his death in his own house, at an afternoon concert in aid of our soldiers at the Front. When he talked to me his sorrow and disappointment came over him again and he burst into uncontrollable weeping. It was a moving spectacle.

I only saw General von Kluck, who was later wounded, on one other occasion and that was years afterwards when he came to see us in

Munich. He began by refusing to talk about the war and the old days, remarking that it excited him too much to think of the injustice which had been done him. In the course of the afternoon, however, he brightened up so much that of his own accord he spoke of all that happened at the Battle of the Marne and told his story with energy and vigour.

Moltke's successor was General von Falkenhayn, and there were difficult days under his leadership for Hindenburg and Ludendorff. As at Tannenberg, they had to fight the other battles on the Eastern Front without sufficient forces at their disposal. One division after another was withdrawn. They continued to deprive them of the possibility of fresh operations on a large scale. The war in the East was fought almost entirely with battalions of elderly Territorial troops.

Warsaw, Lodz and Vilna were taken with weak forces and the same is true of the Russian fortresses of Kovno, Grodno and Novo-Georgievsk.

I can still well remember Ludendorff's letters at that time. They were nothing but one long complaint against Falkenhayn. It was later asserted that Falkenhayn's Chief of Staff was his evil genius. I cannot decide whose was the driving force, for the final result was in any case the same. One thing is certain that under

General von Falkenhayn the position on all Fronts deteriorated considerably.

A terrible long-drawn-out battle raged on the Somme. The siege of Verdun became a nightmare and to it must be added the battles on the Chemin des Dames and in the Vosges. Almost every hour the English airmen attacked the Belgian coast near Ostend. In the East the fortress of Przemyśl, which had cost so much to take, was lost again and the Russians stood again before the towers of Lemberg. Moreover, the Rumanians, in consequence of our unfavourable military position, joined the ranks of the Entente. We were lacking in men, munitions and war material. The situation was critical.

In addition to all this, on the home Front there were violent quarrels and intrigues both in public and behind the scenes. When our need was sorest and they did not know where to turn, they again remembered Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Neither of the two Army leaders had any idea of this when they were summoned to Pless to meet the Kaiser.

On their way, I think it was at Brest Litovsk, that Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor, and the A.D.C. of the Kaiser met them in the train, having come from Pless. The General Military situation was revealed to Hindenburg and Ludendorff in a few blunt words and they were made

acquainted with the plans and intentions of the Kaiser, who had found it absolutely necessary to make a change in the personnel of the Supreme Command.

A conference with the Kaiser followed at Pless. Hindenburg and Ludendorff were appointed to the Supreme Command of the whole of the Eastern Front. They did not return to Kovno, but occupied the smoking ruins of the citadel of Brest Litovsk as their Headquarters. In the shortest possible time everything necessary for their task and the lives of their men was forthcoming.

The country breathed again. People were confident that now everything must come right. The conflict with Falkenhayn had been fought to a finish, but now began a period of intrigues. However, they did not last long.

Although he had no longer to contend against an officer who was his official superior, a formidable antagonist took his place—the Imperial Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg.

The personalities had changed, but the conflict remained. On his opponent's side it was waged by diplomatic means and with far greater subtlety. It was for that very reason all the more dangerous.

I am bequeathing to my children Ludendorff's letters of that period, as they should not be

published until after my death. They throw an interesting light on the events which followed. The opponents of Bethmann-Hollweg, both in the country and in the Reichstag, increased. People were discontented with his policy and when Poland was proclaimed an autonomous Kingdom the discontent increased to a remarkable degree.

The Imperial Chancellor being accustomed to shelter behind Ludendorff's back, attempted to shift the responsibility upon his shoulders, while the General asserted that he had been promised a strong Polish army, but had been disappointed and not received the troops.

And now pamphlets began to appear against the Chancellor and people attacked him at every opportunity. One pamphlet which aroused particular attention bore the title "Juniors Alter." Kapp specified it as the creation of his wit, while an editor whom I knew claimed it as his work.

It was learnt from circles who were in the confidence of the Imperial Chancellor that he intended at the opening of the Reichstag to make an energetic reply to the attacks against himself and his policy.

We awaited the day with impatience as we expected a political crisis of the first order.

People streamed in crowds to the Reichstag. All the boxes and galleries were crowded.

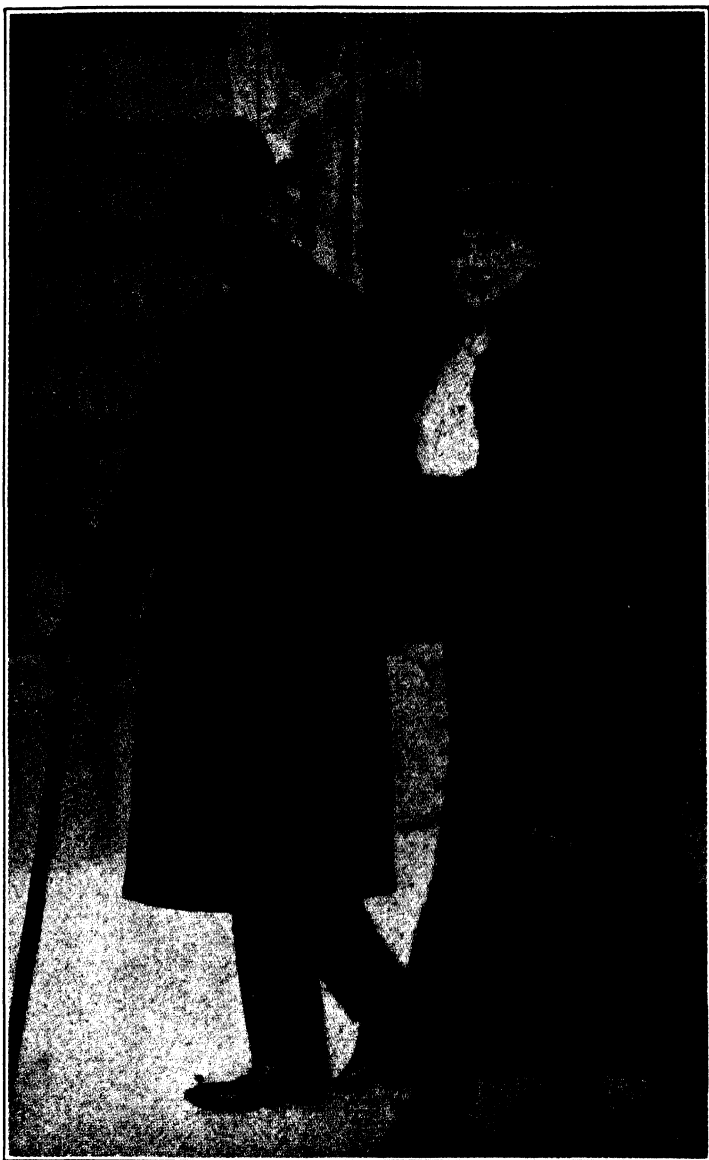
The Imperial Chancellor, hitherto a quiet adroit and intelligent man, the equal of every opponent and every situation, was on this occasion extremely excited and quite kicked over the traces. I remember exactly his opening sentence pronounced with an air of intense conviction. "It is all a shameless lie. These assertions and accusations are sheer downright wickedness."

I had never before been in the Reichstag and the speech made a deep impression on me. When the Chancellor finished a stormy debate began, and when even the President made a slip in the standing orders and refused to allow a Social Democrat to speak, although he had a right to do so, the Deputy Liebknecht fell into a towering rage.

Clad in the field grey of a Territorial he rushed shrieking with clenched fists to the tribunal. Several members of his party closed round him and there was a disgraceful scene, which almost ended in blows.

Terrified by what I had seen and heard I returned home.

Abroad a war was raging. On every Front the fighting was heavy and here at home was this disorder and disunion! How everything had altered since the beginning of the war! Then



E.N.A.

GENERAL LUDENDORFF WITH HIS WIFE, MARGARETHE
LUDENDORFF

we had unity, enthusiasm and patriotism, whereas now——

From day to day the relations between Bethmann and Ludendorff grew worse. Mutual attacks, at first more or less concealed, degenerated into open hostility.

The Kaiser held his Chancellor in great esteem. It must have seemed the end of all things when Ludendorff gave him the choice of Bethmann-Hollweg or himself. Ludendorff declared that under no circumstances could he continue to work with the Chancellor. One of the two must give way.

The Kaiser could not make up his mind. He did not wish to dismiss his Chancellor and on the other hand he could not do without Ludendorff. It was not until the Crown Prince entered the fray and declared himself on the side of Hindenburg and Ludendorff that Bethmann-Hollweg's fate was sealed. But the Kaiser could not forget that there had been an interference with his freedom of choice and was seriously annoyed. When Hindenburg suggested the name of Admiral of the Fleet von Tirpitz as Chancellor, his proposal met with an obstinate resistance on the part of his sovereign, who refused again to bow before another's wish and flatly rejected Tirpitz.

In these critical days Ludendorff told me that

Bethmann had always been afraid of the Admiral and on that account had painted his portrait in the blackest colours when speaking of him to the Kaiser. I do not propose to enlarge on these events as the details of the crisis are now for the most part public property. I will only say this, that when Dr. Michaelis was nominated Chancellor I was very surprised and very depressed.

I regarded him as a remarkably intelligent and far-seeing man who had rendered great services in his capacity as grain-controller. Now he was removed from this post in which he had done admirably and transferred to another, to which he was not equal.

Michaelis was not the person to be Chancellor in this critical time. For this office, quite apart from other qualities, one required the smoothness and subtlety of an eel. It was just that quality which Michaelis lacked ; he was a straightforward man with nothing of the diplomat about him. Perhaps the former Chancellor, von Bülow, would have been the right man, either he or Tirpitz. Michaelis was set to guard a hopeless position.

The war was often called the war of neglected opportunities. It is equally true to say that in Germany, since the fall of Bismarck, an unerring instinct has appointed people of importance to the wrong positions. I need only mention here

the peace Chancellor, General von Caprivi, who did everything he could to refuse this position without avail. The Kaiser insisted on it.

General von Moltke also made the most earnest representations against his own appointment as Chief of the General Staff. The Kaiser replied : " I beg you to accept the post. I am convinced that in times of peace you are equal to it and at a crisis I shall take over the command myself. "

Just as we failed to appoint the right people to the right positions at home and in important matters, so we made the same mistakes in our colonies and in trifling affairs. For the most part our officials were entirely lacking in the power of appreciating the soul of men belonging to an alien stock, a power which the English, despite their avowedly aristocratic character, possess to such a marked degree.

Of this I will give you a classical example. In one of our African colonies a new Governor was expected. The natives were drawn up to receive him, in full parade with all their warrior's equipment. The man whom they awaited approached, strode along the line and found everything in order. Suddenly a cloud came over his brow and his features were furrowed by an expression of grave dissatisfaction.

At the close of the inspection he sent for the

Chieflings and made them an angry speech. Although he had no fault to find with the men, he felt he must express his deep concern at the conduct of the women. They had squatted on the ground without taking the least notice of him, their Governor, and without rendering him the slightest tokens of their homage. He requested that nothing of the sort should occur again. With this the Chieflings were dismissed. The speech had a great if rather unexpected effect. It brought to a head a rising which was not suppressed without effort. It was not as might have been expected, because the men resented the insult or because demands had been made on the women which conflicted with their notions of right and wrong. No, the universal resentment and the rising were caused by the fact that the Governor had taken notice of such inferior creatures as the women and even raised them to the level of the warriors—one of the greatest insults that can be offered to a warrior. Before taking over his duties an Englishman would perhaps have made himself acquainted with the manners and customs of the race concerned and thereby avoided such mistakes. There are not a few little anecdotes of that sort which people used to relate among themselves and which were often successful in provoking a hearty laugh.

If, however, the tale came from the mouth of a stranger it would be greeted with a rather bitter smile.

Another story.

An official has been sent out by the Colonial Office to Africa. His diplomatic task is a delicate one and requires great skill since the Chiefling concerned has the reputation of not being a man who can be played with.

With anxious heart, in faultless morning dress, with a tall hat and patent leather shoes, the envoy was observed ploughing through the deep sand beneath a blazing tropical sun. On his way he meets the English Consul, naturally in white tropical clothes, and says to him, with a deep sigh of relief, "What a blessing," he says, "that I have met you. As you know, I have to go to the Chiefling, and I have not the least idea, perhaps you can tell me, how I should address him, 'Your Majesty,' 'Your Excellence,' or, what shall I call him?"

"Well, you can please yourself about that," replied the Englishman calmly, "I personally always address him as a 'dirty dog' and he feels very flattered."

I have certainly always been a good patriot, but when I heard a story like that I was so full of rage that I had either to laugh or swear.

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN Ludendorff was on the Great General Staff in Berlin we lived in the same house and on the same storey as Colonel Hoffman, who afterwards became a General. Hoffman belonged to another division of the General Staff and our social intercourse was of a purely official character. On the Eastern Front, as I have already said, Ludendorff found Hoffman attached to the Staff.

The labours and anxieties which they shared brought the two men closer together and their previous purely formal relationship developed into something warmer and more sympathetic.

I was then asked to get into closer touch with Frau Hoffman if I was in Berlin. I gladly fell in with my husband's wish, and got to know her better. She is a very intelligent woman with many interests, and as a painter has produced a good deal of work. She also displayed so warm a spirit of patriotism that I found it easy to get on with her.

One day she invited me to lunch with her at Hiller's restaurant. When I got there I looked

in vain in the outer rooms for Frau Hoffman and, failing to find her, went out again and waited in the street. When I came in the second time she came out of a small lounge to meet me, greeted me warmly and led me to her guests.

To my astonishment I found myself faced by a large circle. The ladies were in their best clothes, the table was decked for a banquet and covered with dark red carnations. I felt uncomfortable as I was in ordinary walking dress and had even got a parcel in my hand, but I felt at my ease when I noticed that Frau von Thiele-Winkler, lady-in-waiting to the Crown Princess Cecilia, was also very simply clad.

We sat down at once. On my left was the well-known Catholic deputy, Erzberger, while von Richthofen, leader of the Democrats, was on my other side.

This may be some real use, I thought to myself, and I decided to weigh every word I uttered in the balance. Not a syllable should escape my lips which I would not utter in the presence of the whole world. I decided that any equivocation or misrepresentation would be out of the question.

The enormous influence of Erzberger in the Reichstag was well known to me and equally so his adroitness in tangling or disentangling the

skein of politics according to his judgment and good pleasure. I knew also of his close relations with the Vatican. In dealing with him I should be wise to exercise discretion.

But everything turned out quite differently from what I expected. We had scarcely exchanged a word before Erzberger began : " Your Excellency, it was at my request that Frau Hoffman put me next to you, and now I intend to speak openly to you of all that is on my mind. I beg you not to say a word which could be falsely distorted by myself or others, as the last thing which I wish to do is to cause you any inconvenience." Then he unfolded to me how and why he had brought about the fall of Falkenhayn. He told how under the leadership of that general, Germany would have been dragged down into an abyss, and went on to discuss everything with so much clarity and grasp of his subject and in such eloquent language, that I listened enthralled and scarcely dared to breathe. He had visited the King of Bavaria, the King of Württemberg and the Grand Duke of Baden to convert them to his plans and to convince them that things could not go on as they were going. If they did the Fatherland would be ruined. They had agreed with him and consented to his conveying the united expression of their alarm to the Emperor

Franz Joseph, with a request that he should interfere. He had accordingly gone to Vienna and without more ado obtained the consent of the Emperor.

Having obtained full powers he had gone to Headquarters at Pless, and demanded that the Kaiser should dismiss Falkenhayn. A change had to be effected, otherwise the princes would press for the immediate conclusion of peace.

That his mission had been crowned with success was proved by the fact that Falkenhayn had laid down the Supreme Command and Hindenburg and Ludendorff been sent to the helm. Now his only wish was to co-operate with the new leaders in complete unity and he earnestly besought me to convey this to my husband.

Our conversation was long and extremely lively. It was continued when we had risen from the table. Erzberger told me further of his secret preparations to unchain the revolution in Russia. He had arranged for Lenin and Trotsky, the revolutionaries who were living in exile, to be transported in sealed carriages from Switzerland through Germany to Russia. He hoped that with the outbreak of unrest in Russia the war in the East would come to a standstill and our troops and all our war material be free for the West.

In this direction also his calculations had been correct and his hopes realized. Whether at that time he hoped and desired that the flame might spread to Germany I do not know, as I am not certain how far his intentions were concealed. Later when unrest broke out in Germany the blame was laid on Ludendorff, both for that and for the outbreak of revolution in Russia. I know, however, for a fact, that the most he did was to suffer in silence the passage of Lenin and Trotsky. The idea came from Erzberger.

In accordance with my duty I informed Ludendorff of my interview with Erzberger and of the wishes of the latter. After brief reflection, the General refused to have an interview with him, "I cannot and will not subscribe to any one party. Moreover, Herr Erzberger would cast me away without a thought the moment I was no further use to him."

This decision wounded Erzberger's vanity and his sense of power. From that moment he worked against Ludendorff and it was a duel fought with poisoned weapons. I received, moreover, a few days after our meeting, an official invitation from Herr and Frau Erzberger to a meal, without the customary exchange of calls having taken place between us. Not being accustomed to so loose a regard of the rules of society, I refused it.

Naturally, I knew that it would be against all Ludendorff's wishes for me to visit this house, though I should otherwise have been tempted to accept, as I had never met a more interesting man than Erzberger.

In the same manner other men sought to win my services as a go-between.

There were in Berlin several political salons where high and influential politicians met and where the most important matters were discussed. I always held aloof in spite of many invitations, since for me at any rate these salons had a faint suggestion of espionage and intrigue.

For some time I was visited, more often than I liked, by a real Jewess as handsome as a picture. She was from Poland or Galicia, at any rate she spoke perfect Russian and Polish and was employed by the Supreme Command as a spy. She was certainly extremely intelligent. Whether she had any successes to record I do not know. What disturbed me about her was a perpetual knowing smile, which never left her features. It has been my experience, however, that such a smile usually conceals an ignorance which is not admitted.

Shortly before the end of the war Frau Hoffman also endeavoured to conduct a salon. She wished to bring together members of the most

widely different parties on neutral ground, in order that their views and opinions might be exchanged without reserve. She asserted, and certainly correctly, that the most remarkable men only worked against one another because one man never learnt from the other what aims he was pursuing.

At the urgent request of Ludendorff, the Field-Marshal induced Frau Hoffman to discontinue these political meetings in her house.

I had just received an invitation to meet Ebert there. . . .

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER the recall of General von Falkenhayn, Hindenburg and Ludendorff had taken over the Supreme Command. As the decisive front was now in the West our Headquarters were transferred to Kreuznach. Before the last great spring offensive they were further removed to Spa.

In the most serious time a railway accident occurred. The officers of the Supreme Command were travelling from Avesnes to the Front. The night was dark. The driver of the engine observed with some difficulty that the signal given at one of the switchboxes was of an uncertain character. What could that mean? Pull up? All clear? He went on through the darkness with extreme caution. Suddenly there was a frightful crash—a collision had ensued.

A heavy munition train had struck the train of the Supreme Command—broadside on, derailed the latter by its mighty weight and turned it into a heap of ruins. As though by a miracle no one was injured. No harm came to any of the officers in whose hands lay the conduct of the war

at that time and even the plans and maps which they had with them were undamaged.

At home the situation became more and more acute. The people were so broken down by starvation that they could no longer support the blows of fate.

In the Reichstag the debates became even more discouraging and the deputies gave full rein to their complaints. Falsehood and dishonesty reigned supreme and every party tried to snatch power for itself.

Old Count Hertling, who had succeeded Michaelis in the post of Chancellor, resigned. The choice fell upon Prince Max of Baden.

In our own circle we were very pleased. It was no use shutting our eyes to the position of affairs and it seemed a favourable sign that people should agree on the leadership of a Prince who was so closely connected with the house of Hohenzollern. How could anyone guess that the Social Democrats were using him to overthrow the Kaiser and that a Prince allowed himself to be made the tool of their plans and was bringing about a revolution.

All Berlin awaited with the greatest excitement the day when Prince Max should make his opening speech. People had difficulty in waiting so long to know what programme he was going to

outline and what measures he intended to take for the safety of the country. It had cost me a great deal of trouble to secure a card of admission for that day. I found that my place was in the Royal Box. Apart from Countess Scheel Plessen, maid-of-honour to the Empress, only men who occupied the highest posts at Court were present.

Shortly before Prince Max of Baden mounted the tribune, the door of the box opened and Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia came in. He looked very serious and in silence acknowledged the presence of the men with a distant bow. He kissed the hands of the Countess and myself and took his place between us without a word.

In the diplomatic box near by could be seen the representatives of all the neutral states. By the side of the Swedish Ambassador, Baron Essen, sat his lovely wife. Professor Sven Hedin was also there. I had frequently met him at the house of Princess Fugger Babenhausen.

The faces of all present were overshadowed by a persistent look of despair. One could nowhere descry the faintest glimmer of hope. The foreigners appeared particularly depressed. Perhaps it was because the onlookers already recognized the difficult period which awaited Germany and feared to be drawn into the vortex themselves.

Prince Max appeared. It struck us as strange that instead of uniform he wore morning dress. He was pale as death.

He read his speech and bent so low over his notice that we could not see his face and his words were often unintelligible. What he proposed was utterly crushing and lay like a millstone on my breast. I recognized that in that moment the dynasty had received its death-blow.

It was the beginning of the end, but I had still no idea of the amazing speed with which the disaster was rushing upon us.

Ebert, who later became President of the Empire, spoke after Prince Max and then for the first time in the public session of the Reichstag both Ludendorff and his military measures were severely criticized.

Prince August Wilhelm and I sat there horrified. I felt myself growing paler. In a friendly and sympathetic manner he made a low bow almost of homage before me and then went out.

When we left our box at the conclusion of the sitting Sven Hedin rushed up to me. With sorrowful emotion and deep sympathy he exclaimed : " Poor Germany, now you are lost ! "

In this connection the letter of Prince Max is interesting. He wrote the same evening to Ludendorff.

The Imperial Chancellor

“BERLIN,

“October 17th, 1918.

“YOUR EXCELLENCY,

“This sad day must not close without my telling you that my personal feelings towards you are and will remain unchanged. I count myself fortunate in that I have known you and that we have treated each other with frankness. I feel with you the fate which you have suffered, and my admiration, sympathy, and gratitude for the splendid achievements which are linked with your name, will always be with you.

“With my sincerest wishes for your prosperity,

“I remain, your Excellency, Sincerely yours,

“MAX PRINCE OF BADEN.”

Several years later when Prince August Wilhelm visited us in Munich, and we were for some time alone in the room, he asked me point-blank whether I remembered that dreadful day on which Prince Max of Baden made his opening speech as Chancellor in the Reichstag? “And did you also notice, that by my demeanour towards yourself I desired to put it on record that I intended in the future to continue my loyalty towards your husband?”

I replied that I had felt it to be self-evident, more particularly as he had emphasized it so

strongly. By next day it must have been all over Berlin and I had felt very grateful.

The visit of the Prince to Munich took place shortly after the death of our beloved Empress Augusta Victoria. He spoke with affectionate admiration of his mother who had gone to her rest. He said how glad he was that he had been able to be with her during her time of suffering.

Although the Empress was so attached to her children she had never hesitated a moment to follow the Kaiser. She considered it her duty to share his exile. Her fate and that of the Kaiser and our country, the prevailing state of affairs and the revolution in Germany, as well as the separation from her children, had all quickly undermined her strength. She suffered from a serious affection of the heart. The Prince confided to me further that his own fate, his divorce from his wife who was the favourite daughter-in-law of the Empress, had touched her very nearly, but that without recking of her own sorrows, she had tried to comfort him and to help him to overcome his trouble.

On her sick-bed the Empress had a great longing to hear once more the old hymns which had been sung during her youth in Schleswig-Holstein. Prince August Wilhelm with great

difficulty procured the notes and someone was found in Doorn to practise the hymns with an accompaniment on the harmonium. One morning when the Empress lay on her bed in great exhaustion, with her pale face lying far back on the pillows, suddenly the old long-forgotten melodies floated into her.

She raised her head and listened. A smile of recognition crept over her features, a happy gleam, and very softly she joined in the hymns.

When the last notes had died away, she whispered with a feeble smile. "How beautiful that was ! How lovely to have been able to hear the old hymns once again !"

On the death of the Empress it was not only those near and dear to her who mourned. The whole German people lamented and bent their heads in sympathy with the cruel fate of the sufferer and her sorrows.

Ludendorff and I went from Munich to Berlin. We felt it was our absolute duty to accompany the dead Empress on her last journey. The funeral was deeply impressive. An innumerable crowd of people had been brought to Potsdam by motor, by omnibus and by rail. Folk streamed into Potsdam from every side and surrounded the New Palace.

When the carriage drew near a silence fell

around it, as the crowd were gripped by the solemnity of the hour. There was no funeral march to break in upon the peace of our devotions. The procession glided noiseless by and the dead woman was carried to her grave amid the blessings of those countrymen whose universal benefactress she had been.

The next afternoon we had an audience with the Crown Princess. I made the acquaintance of the Cecilienhof, which is more like a comfortable country house than a royal mansion.

How different the time was from those days full of joyous hope which I had spent in the old palace of the Crown Prince. It was in the midst of the war and the Crown Princess had enquired with the greatest interest how things stood in the East. Ludendorff had to give her a complete résumé : it was the time of the great victory.

In the course of the evening the Crown Prince telephoned from the Western Front and reported the storming of the "Dead Man," a height above Verdun, which had already cost us much bloody sacrifice.

He was in good spirits and we were in the most cheerful mood ourselves—buoyed up with glad hopes for the future. Alas ! they were unfulfilled. What we had won in fierce conflict, every small advantage, every foot of soil which we had

wrested from the foe by obstinate pitiless fighting, was lost again on the next day. The situation altered daily and all our efforts to storm the fortress proved unavailing.

The Crown Prince was always very friendly to Ludendorff, and his letter showed the highest recognition of the General's services. Ludendorff also was the faithful and grateful supporter of the Crown Prince.

It was not until after the conclusion of peace, when the Crown Prince was living in Wieringen that a dark cloud came over these good relations. The Crown Prince declared in an interview that he had always regretted the way in which the good name of Germany had suffered by the lying reports of the Supreme Command. This declaration got about and Ludendorff was gravely affronted. During the war the Army Reports were signed by him, and he was in consequence directly concerned by the reproaches of the Crown Prince. Ludendorff explained to me why, particularly during the last months, the reports from the Front could not entirely correspond with the facts.

"At home things were seething and fermenting like a witch's cauldron. Discontent and disaffection flamed up on all sides. By giving a favourable colour to the Army Reports I hoped to

cheer up the dispirited crowd and induce a mood of greater confidence. Disturbing news from the front would only have produced anxiety and terror. In an emergency falsehood can become a virtue."

When the Crown Prince next came to Munich, he took no notice of Ludendorff, who from that time onwards, at least in my presence, has never allowed the name of the German Crown Prince to pass his lips.

But one must remember all that had happened. Ludendorff was concerned in many movements which in no way redounded to the welfare of his country. I am convinced that the Crown Prince Rupprecht had not concealed from the German Crown Prince how Ludendorff had offered him his services when there was a question of setting up a new Catholic empire under the house of Wittelsbach. Ludendorff was then ready to swear allegiance to his new master, although by doing so he would be a traitor to the Prussian dynasty.

The Crown Prince Rupprecht refused Ludendorff's offers. From that time onwards Ludendorff nurtured a deep resentment against the Bavarian Crown Prince which, when the Hitler movement had failed, was publicly expressed. It should be further mentioned that from that time onwards Prince Eitel Friedrich, Prince Oscar and

Prince August Wilhelm, who previously paid us many visits in Munich, never crossed our threshold.

This is perhaps intelligible in the light of the events which I have just narrated.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE position at the Front had become exceedingly critical. American troops were being landed daily and marched with unimpaired vigour of mind and body and great numerical superiority against German soldiers who had been enfeebled by undernourishment and dispirited by years of suffering. Our exhausted men could no longer withstand the onrush of the English, French, and Americans with their abundance of war-material of the latest pattern. And how the morale at home had deteriorated ! I think it was in 1915 that even a man like Rathenau had demanded in a letter to the Upper Eastern command, enormous annexations—Belgium, Poland, Courland and a slice of Russia. Whereas now. . . .

Ludendorff's presence in Berlin was frequently necessary and, as I was then staying there in my old pension, we often saw each other.

He had conferences with the Chancellor and his newspapers, with deputies of the Reichstag and people from the Foreign Office. When Ludendorff demanded fresh troops, they were

approved on paper, but usually not supplied in practice. He complained of it bitterly. According to his views it would still have been possible, without too much inconvenience, to obtain reinforcements from home. He thought that businesses and offices should be more carefully "combed" and every available man sent to the Front.

People screamed and shouted, demanding the immediate dismissal of Ludendorff and the conclusion of peace with the Entente.

All that he had done for his country was forgotten in the twinkling of an eye. At once the adored and idolized hero was dethroned. One can almost say that it happened in a night.

After his last interview with Herr von Payer, Ludendorff told me, with great bitterness, all that had occurred. Involuntarily my memory turned to other days.

I remembered standing on the Friedrichstrasse station in Berlin to meet Ludendorff who was arriving from the Eastern Front. It had got about that he was expected and crowds of people who wished to see him had collected on the platform. When the train came in there was a frightful rush. He had scarcely descended, when in a trice he was surrounded and greeted by a storm of cheering. The crush was so great that we could scarcely get through and even in the

streets the crowd was so densely packed that our motor could only advance at a foot's pace. I asked my husband with a smile if he was not pleased at the gratitude and admiration of the people, and I remember how gravely he took it. "Oh, believe me," he replied, "the people's favour is as changeable as that of their rulers. You will see they'll stone me before I've done."

He also complained of the far too lenient punishment of deserters. The Social Democrats were undermining the discipline in the trenches and suborning men on leave to desert. Moreover, those reinforcements which did reach the Front consisted for the most part of badly educated men who were equally defective from a moral standpoint. The officers had no longer any control over them and they could not be relied upon. If it was not desired to face these unfavourable circumstances with resolution, then proposals for peace should be made to the Entente with all possible speed. But as things stood, Ludendorff said he could no longer be answerable for anything or accept the responsibility for what would and unquestionably must occur in the future.

This manifesto of Ludendorff's was communicated to the Reichstag through the mouth of Herr von Payer. An unceasing storm of in-

dignation broke loose and a flood of insults and abuse was poured on Ludendorff.

He alone was, they said, to blame. He had brought Germany to ruin by not giving a true picture of the position at the right time and by rejecting all opportunities of peace owing to his personal hunger for victory and power. Now, when it was too late and he himself had undergone a complete nervous breakdown, he began to complain and cast the whole blame upon others.

A few days after the stormy scenes in the Reichstag which I have just described, Hindenburg and Ludendorff were summoned to the Kaiser. He was very ungracious and his reproaches were chiefly directed against Ludendorff.

Since the ambitious advance in the spring which had come to grief so pitifully, the position of Germany had become quite disastrous. In a cruel and violent speech the Kaiser gave vent to his displeasure.

It was a cruel blow for Ludendorff. He felt that he had been most harshly treated and answered the Kaiser as follows: "To my great regret I am compelled by Your Majesty's reproaches to recognize that I no longer possess the confidence of Your Majesty and that my labours at the

Front no longer find favour in Your Majesty's eyes. May I, with the greatest submission, ask for my recall ? ”

The Kaiser hesitated, pondered for a moment, and replied : “ I thank you for your resignation. You are thereby rendering my position very much easier. I shall endeavour, with the aid of the Socialists, to build up a new empire for myself.”

Thus ended, after its brilliant beginning, the splendid career of a man who had served his Kaiser faithfully and worn himself out, day and night, by his efforts and anxiety for his country's good.

I stood at the window when Ludendorff's car returned soon after eleven o'clock in the morning. I was surprised that he had come back so soon from this important interview, and felt a strange sense of depression. Pale as death he came into the room and sat heavily down in a chair. The words he uttered were spoken almost without expression. “ The Kaiser has sacked me. I have been dismissed.” For long he sat motionless, staring in front of him. Hard as I tried, I could not manage to comfort him or draw him from his melancholy brooding : “ Who is to be your successor,” I asked. “ I have suggested Kuhl.” “ Why not Seeckt ? ” I said. “ I never

thought of him," he replied. Then he jumped up and said abruptly : " In a fortnight we shall have no Empire and no Emperor left, you will see."

The gloomy prophecy was to be fulfilled and it caused him intense suffering. I think what disturbed and tortured him most was that he could see in advance the disastrous conclusion of the war and the wretched fate of Germany. He felt also that he had been deserted by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg whose joys and sorrows he had shared for all those years, and who, while remaining in the Kaiser's service, had allowed him to resign alone.

Even against General Hoffman he was bitterly resentful, for the following reason. Hoffman was invited to dine with the Kaiser and requested to give his opinion of the recent conduct of the war on the Western Front.

The General obeyed the order and gave the information desired. Ludendorff heard of it ; he was passionately indignant and made no effort to conceal his ill-will. He considered that Hoffman's way of dealing with the matter was improper conduct in a colleague and looked upon it as an act of revenge. The General had had a grudge against him since the time when the Supreme Command had left the East and been

transferred to Kreuznach without bringing Hoffman with them to the West.

When I spoke to Hoffman on the subject shortly before his death he made the following protest. "This assertion is quite untrue. In no way does it represent the facts. With the departure of the Supreme Command for the West my own position became almost omnipotent as my new chief Prince Leopold of Bavaria allowed me unlimited control over the whole of the Eastern Front. Further at the time of our conversation, I emphasized to the Kaiser that it was only by virtue of his express command that I replied to the question which he put to me."

After the departure of Ludendorff, General Groener was appointed Hindenburg's new Chief of Staff. He had formerly been Inspector-General of Military Railways and had at all times discharged his duties with the greatest energy and prudence. He is to-day Minister of Defence for the Empire.

General von Lossberg was given the responsible task of withdrawing the Army, which had already retired to the Siegfried line, with as little loss as possible to Germany.

A captain who was one of my faithful friends gave the following description of the crossing of the Rhine: "While we were crossing the Rhine

bridge I looked back and passed through one of the saddest and grimmest moments of my life. Like a dream the war passed once more before my eyes—all its laborious marches, its battles and victories.

“I remembered how I had lain on my back stricken with five wounds, but always urged by one persistent feverish desire—to return to the Front as soon as that was possible. Then, how we were gradually worn out by the crushing superiority in the numbers of the enemy, until we could no longer meet it, and slowly bled to death rather than give way. As we crossed the Rhine all that came back to my mind. Then as though I was in a theatre, a heavy iron curtain seemed to drop and sever me from a glorious epoch in the history of my beloved country, while Germany’s future loomed dark and sinister before me.”

I can never forget his words, even if we never speak of it again. I know that although the wound has healed over, it would break open at the slightest touch.

CHAPTER XXV

BETWEEN his dismissal and the outbreak of the revolution Ludendorff went through some miserable days. Day after day he sat at his writing-table, utterly depressed and sunk in the gloomy silence of despair. At the first signs of the revolution, though his frown grew darker, his interest in life returned and that was at least something gained.

My own feelings I kept in the background and left no stone unturned to console the General and to be a faithful comrade to him. I had been the proud wife of the conquering hero and I felt that I must share in the hostility and the execration which now broke over him.

At the outbreak of the revolution the Spartacists were not content with heaping insults on him and befouling his name—there was no roof to shelter his head in Germany and even his life was no longer safe. It was a horrifying thought that he might fall into the hands of the Spartacists, who perpetually clamoured for his surrender.

After the revolution Ludendorff repeatedly

declared : " The greatest blunder of the revolutionaries was to leave us all alive. If I once get back to power, there'll be no quarter. I should hang up Ebert, Scheidemann and the comrades with a clear conscience and watch them dangle ! "

His friends urged him to leave Germany. I never joined in this advice as that sort of solution seemed to me unworthy of him. I did nothing, however, to dissuade him since I would not and could not shoulder the responsibility for such advice. I held my peace. From that time onwards I have learnt to be silent and to keep my own counsel.

Ludendorff decided to escape and left the house under cover of night with a false beard and blue spectacles after having formally acquainted Ebert with his intention. The next few days he spent in Potsdam, near his brother, since much had to be settled before the General could leave for Denmark.

He made the journey in the company of a captain who had been appointed to the German Legation at Copenhagen. In spite of his disguise he was recognized during the crossing when already on the steamer, by a naval officer who communicated his discovery to the captain. Consequently he did not succeed in reaching Copenhagen unobserved, and found himself after

a few days the target of all eyes, which displeased him extremely. He conferred with his travelling companion and they decided to retire to Sweden.

The German naval attaché in Copenhagen volunteered to provide Ludendorff with adequate asylum among his friends and his efforts were successful.

When, however, the General reached Malmo, new difficulties arose. The married couple, who were to receive him, unexpectedly fell out with each other and his sojourn in their house became impossible. They recommended him on their part to good friends of theirs so that finally in a country house at Hesselholm he found a refuge and a friendly and hospitable family with whom he could live. He remained there for months.

Ludendorff's first letters from Denmark and Sweden revealed a complete and deep-seated pessimism. He blamed himself for having left his country in the lurch in its deepest need. He complained of having to live in idleness and exile with fettered hands, and watch the dismemberment of his homeland without being able to render assistance. He blamed himself for having treated me at times with scant courtesy and for having left me helpless in Germany at the mercy of the unbridled insolence of the masses.

I reproduce two letters written by Ludendorff during that period. The first letter was written before his departure for Copenhagen.

"MY DEAR WIFE,

"My heart was torn at leaving you and having to leave you alone, and what made me saddest of all was the memory of my hard words to you shortly before I left.

"My own wife, we shall see each other again and I will be different to you. I love you and there seems no end to my misery. Do leave the place where you are now as knowing you there makes me so anxious.

"Oh, for Work! This idleness and lack of independence is horrible. I want to work for our unhappy country.

"To me it all seems like a bad dream. I do not know if I was right to go away. Things cannot go on like this for ever. I say 'for ever,' though the whole thing has only just begun.

"In a few days Liebknecht will be at the helm and we shall have a social revolution. I am glad that I can at least write to you. Let me have news of you as soon as I can give you my address and the way in which you can write to me.

"I love you.

"YOUR OWN HUSBAND."

The second letter was written from Copenhagen on his way to Sweden.

"I have arrived here and want to work. My room is small and outside in the narrow street there is a tramway so that there won't be much sleep or work for me. Already I am simply longing to get back to you and Germany.

"For four years I have fought for my country and now when so much is hanging in the balance I must stand aside. I am at war with myself and the whole world. Dearest, it isn't easy to pull myself together again.

"Those days after October 26th were so cruel.

"I am afraid I cannot stop here and would like to go into the country to some place where it is quite quiet. The horrible noise is going on outside and the journey and all I have been through, have got on my nerves. Also I have been discovered. I travelled with the captain of the *Albatross*, who is interned in Sweden. He recognized me.

"My nerves are too much on edge and sometimes my speech gets out of control. There is no help for it, my nerves have simply gone to pieces! Yes, dearest, if only so many things were different in this world. Now I'm afraid I shall make you sad but you must know how things look to me. I never counted on being thanked but this

ingratitude on the part of my country touches me deeply.

“ I want to write—to write—and then I want to fight against those whose views up to now have been the same as mine. But now life has again borne me further on. No human fate has been as hard as mine. Tell everybody how like my fate was to that of Hannibal. That will teach them to understand. Keep these letters, dearest, in time they will form my memoirs.”

Later on he sought and found relief in his work.

He began to write his war memories.

Again in retrospect he passed through the golden age of Germany and all those battles and victories in which, as an army commander, he played so leading a part.

This work was the best thing he could do to make his sojourn endurable. Intuitively he had grasped a means of securing his peace of mind and giving him sufficient strength to accept his fate.

None the less he never got over the feeling of isolation and desertion. In all his letters he earnestly begged me to come.

If he had known how things were going with me in Berlin he would certainly have been still more anxious. The manageress of the pension where I was staying, had all she could do to

protect me against those baser elements who desired to secure me as a hostage and thereby to compel the General to return to Germany.

It was by no means a pleasant time for me. On the contrary it was exceedingly trying. The people who lived in my house began to grumble and became touchy. They joined in demanding my dismissal from the manageress, as my presence endangered the safety of them all.

Wherever I was, sooner or later, there were bound to be attacks on my life. The inmates of the house belonged for the most part to the families of officers. With some I was even on friendly terms. For that very reason I was extremely annoyed by their attitude and I was quite determined not to vacate my room unless compelled to do so. But all my efforts were in vain. One day I was turned into the street in ten minutes. To the credit of the manageress, I must admit, that she only acted with the best intentions. She took great precautions for my safety and for that reason desired to remove me from her house.

But as for the others. I could only pray to Heaven, save me from my friends. It was not the first time that I got to know what the "loyalty" of true friends implied, a comedy which was repeated oft enough during the war.

If a victory was gained at the Front, then everybody expressed a devoted friendship for me. If the situation altered and there were difficulties, I found myself suddenly quite alone until an improvement in our circumstances again brought me friendship and affection. Countless times these words rang in my ears : " Oh, but you know I'm not like that." To which I would reply with a friendly smile : " Of course, I'm quite convinced you are not like that."

This time I was full of rage and indignation, and the experience which I went through caused me radically to revise for all future time my affection for my fellows.

But I do not wish to be unjust. I had some friends who remained faithful to me. One of these families gave me and our good servant, Rudolph, whom I had always retained, a warm welcome. I stayed with them until at Christmas I joined my husband in Sweden. I owe them my heartfelt thanks since not many would have had the courage to offer shelter to the wife of the best hated man in all Germany. Often we were shown more consideration and more helpfulness by strangers than by our relations. In this connection I remember an incident which happened when Ludendorff was still in Berlin.

Among the friends who exerted themselves

for his safety was the famous sculptor, Professor Manzel, and his wife. They declared that we ought not to remain in our flat as it was only too well known to the ignorant mob among the revolutionaries.

It could end in no good.

Frau Manzel continued : " A family who are friends of ours, have sent you a hearty invitation to go to their villa, which will serve your purpose very well because the villa is in quite a different part of Berlin where your presence would never be suspected. Our friends' car is at the door and you can take up your new quarters at once."

I went out with Frau Manzel to Pankow and found a charming villa hidden away in a wonderful old park. I was warmly welcomed by its owners and invited to share their meal. The rooms were ready for our reception.

After the meal, when Frau Manzel and I had taken our leave, and even put on our fur coats, a sailor, a relation of one of the maids, came running up in breathless haste and warned us on no account to go home by the direct route in the car with our expensive fur coats. Armed battalions of the working class were marching along the Brunnestrasse and they had torn up the pavement and the rails of the tramways and had erected barricades.

It was really a most unpleasant surprise. We stared at each other in desperation. We could not take up the quarters for the night which were offered us, because the telephone connection had been cut or shut off and we had no means of letting our husbands know. What were we to do? The sailor suggested that the owner of the house should lend us his carriage, which would attract far less attention. In addition, he, the sailor, was ready to take his seat on the coachman's box with his red armlet, get us through the pickets and accompany us home by a circuitous route through the Moabite district.

And that is what happened. On our way we met countless columns of armed workmen. The Red guards were marching in procession, but with our sailor on the box we passed all the dangerous points without being stopped.

At our door I desired to give some token of our gratitude to our chivalrous escort, but he refused any reward and modestly repelled my gratitude. It had only been his duty and responsibility to warn the ladies and bring them safe home.

With a glance at his red armlet I asked him what his business was in Berlin and to what body he was attached. I learnt to my great astonishment that it was the Sailors' Division

of Jannovitz Bridge—the most dreaded of all the sailors' divisions and the one responsible for the worst atrocities.

A naval officer, a Lieutenant-Commander who had become a communist by conviction, led the sailors to the Castle at the outbreak of the revolution. Prince Eitel Frederick told me the whole story.

The revolutionaries insisted on the Empress being present while her room, and in particular her writing-table, was searched. On the arm of the Prince she entered the boudoir. Pale as death with terror and anxiety, trembling in her whole body and yet with complete dignity, she was a spectator at this painful drama.

She was completely mistress of herself and only wavered when the letters of the Kaiser and her children were rummaged through and read, but afterwards at once regained her composure. The naval officer, the leader of the raiders, in an access of pity, or perhaps remembering his education as a gentleman, offered the Empress a chair. She refused it with silent dignity and remained standing upright until the end.

The Lieutenant-Commander had, years before the collapse of Germany, been permeated by advanced ideas and resigned his commission. He found life impossible in a circle whose views

did not square with his own. People understood him and regretted the loss of a decent fellow and a good comrade. In the days of the revolution one of his former friends in Wilhelmshaven received a card from him with these words : " Didn't I always tell you that it was bound to end like this ? "

The brother of one of our best air fighters was also a convinced communist. The conduct and leadership of the bloody battles in the Wesel were in his hands. The orders which he gave were a perfect model and his hastily drawn sketches of the position, which were found on a captured member of the Red Guards, bore the stamp of a former officer of the General Staff.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE day of my departure for Sweden was fixed for December 22nd. The same captain from Copenhagen who had accompanied Ludendorff, had made all preparation for me and placed himself at my disposal.

At that time facilities for travel in Germany were at their worst and the railways in particular were in a deplorable condition. The carriages were unheated, uncleaned and always packed to overflowing. On every side they showed traces of insane destruction, and everything which was not clamped down and riveted was torn off and stolen ; the cushions were ripped up, the window-panes shattered and the straps and luggage nets either in tatters or completely missing.

Consequently travelling was no pleasure, particularly such a long journey.

I was nervous and frightened. . . .

At the appointed hour in the middle of the night the captain fetched me with his car and we drove to the Stettin railway station. Although we had arrived an hour and a half before the

departure of the train, there was an incredible confusion at the barrier and we had to force our way forward. No one else was let through behind us otherwise it would have been impossible to deal with the crowds on the platform.

We looked at each other in despair and began our search for seats. The carriages were packed with soldiers and crammed with knapsacks, trunks and suitcases. Dust and dirt reigned everywhere. The soldiers bore visible traces of their long marches and railway journeys. Perspiring and unwashed, in many cases caked with mud as they had left the trenches, they had started on the journey. They were the last rearguard from the Front, who none the less wished to reach their homes and families before Christmas.

The train, the length of which was interminable, was already densely crowded and in spite of this the greater number of the passengers ran up and down on the platform trying, like ourselves, to find a suitable corner. A kindly pair of hands found us a place in the corridor between two compartments. Our hand-bags were stowed there. The captain sat on them and took me without further ceremony on his knee. It was certainly neither pleasant nor comfortable, but we were lucky to have found any room at all. Despite the bitter cold, many soldiers climbed on

to the roofs of the carriages. Everyone got on board and the train loaded to its limit began to move by fits and starts.

Berlin lay behind us.

I was perched the whole night long on my uneasy seat. In that narrow space there was no room to stretch my legs, amongst all that luggage. The most horrible thing was the atmosphere. The smell of human bodies, the stable odours of the cavalymen and the reek of all possible and impossible cigars and rasping tobacco made the air so thick that one could scarcely breathe. One had to be glad and thankful to be on the move at all, but although I tried to sit upright and pull myself together I was seized with a giddiness against which all my fortitude was of no avail. I succeeded, however, in getting out a bottle of eau-de-Cologne from my bag which gave me some relief. I also found a little hole in the window-pane through which now and then I could inhale a breath or two of fresh and frosty air.

Our fellow-travellers were a many-coloured mixture thrown together from every branch of the army. Infantry, artillery and cavalry, old territorials and young volunteers. Amongst them were several N.C.O.'s from the field artillery. They all behaved towards each other and us

with a pleasant spirit of camaraderie, with the exception of one soldier who struck me as extremely unpleasant.

It was purgatory to be in the same room as this fellow, and his comrades found him as much a burden as we did. A giant, heavy and brutal, with coarse features. In contrast to the others he was a terrible braggart, a windbag who shamelessly abused all who had been of any importance in the war—in particular the Emperor and Ludendorff. According to him these two were bloodthirsty dogs who, by their cowardly flight abroad, had escaped the punishment of the law, and Ludendorff had, in addition, stuffed his purse with the proceeds of the Ludendorff charities before leaving the country. The brute emphasized all his coarse and vulgar accusations by adding these words at their close: "I must know that, I was a member of the Soldiers' Council." He need not have added this assertion. His way of wearing his cloak, the shape and set of his cap, and his whole character proclaimed unmistakably the type of the wretched Red Guard.

I should like above all to have jumped up and branded the fellow as a slanderous liar, but my companion calmed me down and urged me to be more cautious. With resignation and a heavy heart I held my peace. I realized that it would

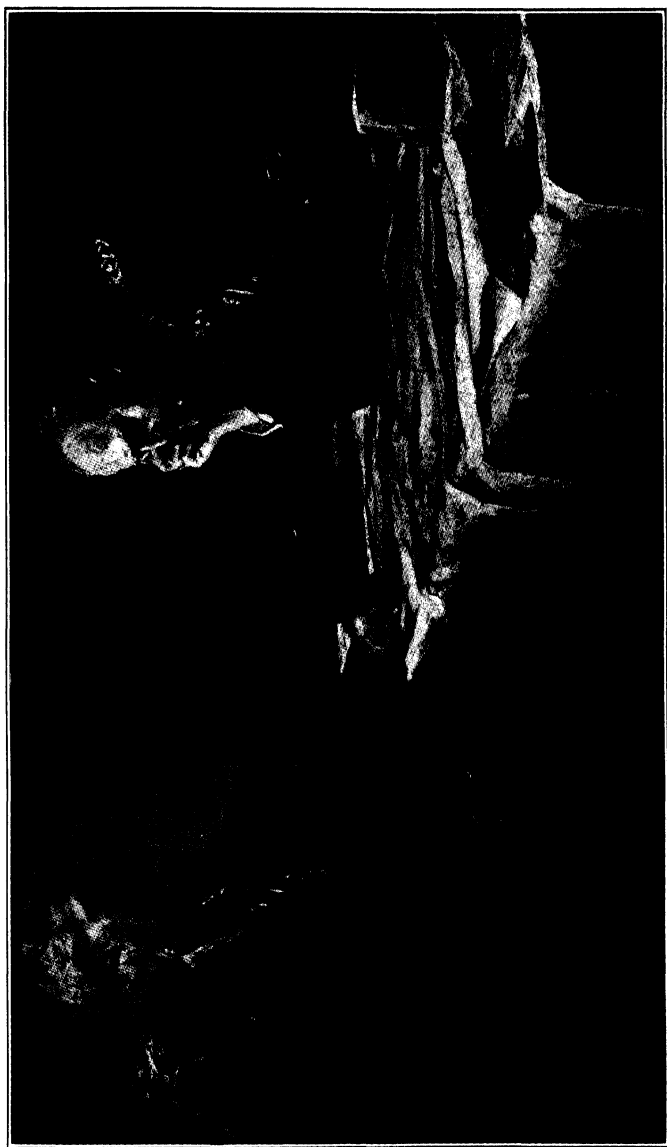
have been the height of folly to have allowed myself to be drawn into a dispute with the man—and dangerous into the bargain.

Late in the evening we reached Sassnitz after a journey of night on twenty-four hours. In complete darkness a horde of men, chiefly civilians, began to move towards the only hotel which was then open during the winter. We had to be satisfied with a single room in the annex of the hotel. Again we looked at each other in despair, as so often on this journey, but we had no other choice.

The room had certainly not been heated during the whole winter and the damp musty cold penetrated our every limb.

We filled the small iron stove up to the brim with briquettes until it got red hot and diffused a comforting warmth and the captain unpacked the contents of his bag. Its contents were miracles which I had not looked at for many a year. White bread and real butter—not margarine. A slice of ordinary dimensions—not a homœopathic dose—hard-boiled eggs, roast chicken, *pâté de foie gras*, biscuits and sugar.

In a thermos-flask he had hot real China tea. I sat with big round eyes and looked on fascinated while all these splendid things were daintily set out before me. With our food we became a



E.A.A.

GENERAL LUDENDORFF WHEN CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG

From a drawing from life made at the Front during the Great War.

shade more comfortable and we had a very cheerful meal. Then we lay down to get a little sleep as the train-ferry from Sassnitz was to leave at five o'clock in the morning.

Although I had gone to rest with my clothes on I shivered with the cold and could not close my eyes. The bed was so damp that I was wet to the skin and from time to time I got up, careful to make no noise, in order to feed the stove with fresh briquettes.

My companion had courteously resigned the only bed to my use and made himself comfortable in an arm-chair. Without wishing to do so he had certainly chosen the better part as his resting-place was near the stove. He slumbered peacefully and I envied him.

As one can well imagine our toilet in rising was difficult and correspondingly short and simple. Outside it was still so dark that one could not see one's hand before one's face. In a violent snow-storm and in biting cold we fought our way to the landing-stage. But before we could go on board the welcome well-lighted boat, we had to undergo a strict examination of our passports. We were not even spared a personal search. For this purpose a shed of rough boards was provided. Men to the left—women to the right.

A plump and friendly customs officer received

me and stripped me to my chemise. She went through my hair with both hands (the bobbed hair of to-day would have meant a great saving in the labour of the task) and felt all down my body to be very soles of my feet. The lining of my fur coat was examined, and the insides and outsides of my boots were tested. Then at last I was allowed to pass the barrier.

As I crossed the landing-stage I remembered a remark of Ludendorff's when we were travelling in a steamer from the seaside resort of Fanse and lying off Esbjerg on the coast of Jutland. Narrowly scrutinizing the massive iron fabric of the landing-stage he put his forefinger on his nose—a gesture which was characteristic of his reflection. “No man in the world,” he said, “is going to persuade me that this machinery was constructed for peaceful passenger traffic and the transport of cattle. There is no place in which the English could disembark more expeditiously and with greater facility.” That was quite a number of years before the World-War.

The captain had passed through the customs more quickly than myself and was already waiting for me.

The boat was very comfortable. First of all I ordered a hot bath—oh, the sense of well-being ! Then I lay down in my cabin and slept like a top.

At two o'clock in the afternoon we reached Malmö. The weather was still bad. Great wet snowflakes were whirling down and one sank to one's knees in mud. The customs examination was again very strict and in addition I had the bad luck to fall into the hands of a particularly unpleasant official.

Everything in my trunk was thrown into the wildest confusion and he put on one side what he thought was dutiable. . . . Cigarettes, a china figure from Berlin which I had brought with me as a Christmas present for my hostess, a doll for her little girl and many other things. I stood by in silence and looked at them.

As he could speak no German and I no Swedish, we had no means of understanding each other. Finally he fetched the supervisor and showed him with silent triumph the mountain of articles which he had laid on one side as dutiable. I was disappointed—was this Swedish hospitality? But the supervisor, a friendly old man, put everything right. He examined my passport, peering over his spectacles, gave me a military salute and said without touching any of my luggage: "Madame can go through." It was not until nearly evening that we could resume our journey from Malmö to Hesselholm.

I had a short rest at the hotel and then went on

foot to the station. The porter promised to bring our luggage punctually to the train. We had each of us two large handbags, which were provided with the seal of the Legation, but were unlocked, despite the fact that in one of them I had money, jewelry and other articles of value.

I was at the station in good time and was ready to get into the train at once. My companion had already booked our seats.

For the first time for many a long day I found myself in a clean, comfortable, thoroughly heated train. The Swedish carriages struck me as splendidly roomy. They had soft deep cushions and the floor was covered with lovely carpets.

Involuntarily, I wondered how long it would be in Germany before the scrupulous cleanliness and punctuality of our own trains for which we had previously been renowned, would come back again.

The captain, who had sunk back into the depths of his corner, had fallen into a light dose without worrying about our luggage. Suddenly I noticed with horror that the train was moving and our bags had not yet arrived. I woke the captain who sprang up in alarm and mechanically consulted his watch. He made certain that it was long before the time of departure, and the train was merely shunting. With that he sat down

again in his corner and confessed to me, with a smile, that one of his weaknesses was that he always had to sleep in a train.

At an earlier date when he was still an adjutant, he had never been able to keep awake on official journeys with his General. This said, he fell into a light dose again.

Was our luggage coming or not? All of a sudden, what was that? It was no longer a question of shunting—the lights of Malmö were vanishing in the distance—my companion whom I had unwillingly aroused was highly disturbed and painfully surprised by this discovery.

I reproached him without mincing my words and became excited, as I remembered that I had very important papers for Ludendorff in one of the bags. Their loss was particularly distasteful to me because the papers had been confided to me by those who trusted in my reliability. The thought that they might be lost made me furious. In my excitement I could scarcely refrain from making my unfortunate escort the victim of a regular scene.

He was humbly apologetic, but what use was that? The luggage was missing. We telegraphed from the next station to Malmö for the bags to be sent on and that calmed me to a certain degree.

In Hesselholm, a sleigh to which lovely white horses were harnessed waited for us at the station.

It was a wonderful journey : the rage of the snowstorm had abated and great bright stars sparkled in the sky among the torn wisps of cloud. When we were outside the town we went at a tearing speed through a tall dense pinewood. The snow lay glittering in the branches which hung low beneath their heavy burden.

It was not long before we reached our goal. We received our luggage the same night and nothing was missing.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE moment I saw Ludendorff again I realized how very great his mental agony had been. In the present state of his feelings he must have found solitude in a strange land particularly hard to bear. Hide-bound, as he always was, by his temperament, he was unable to give any outward sign of his pleasure at my arrival, although, as I knew, he must have missed me dreadfully.

When he took his walk next morning, I was shown Hesselholm. It was a fine old country house, improved by its alterations to suit the most pampered taste. The high, well-lighted rooms were furnished with heirlooms which had come down from one generation to another, and everything shone with the polish which comes from the most scrupulous attention.

The mansion was situated in a large park. Tall dark pines laden with snow, stood round the house as though to protect it. The park itself was a wild landscape in miniature with crags of moss-covered stone and dense undergrowth. With particular pride our host introduced us to

the stables which were his kingdom. Horses were his ruling passion. He was a well-known gentleman jockey and never failed to attend a race meeting. His name stood high in international sporting circles. He told me how he bought his horses raw and untrained and then rode them himself and broke them in.

He possessed a collection of prizes from every country, a real mass of silver which was housed in a palatial room protected in tall glass cabinets.

Our host was a slender man of middle height and made a particularly fine figure on a horse. It was a pleasure to watch him ride. No hurdle, no obstacle was too high for him, and the most difficult horses went if he were on them as though they had been trained for the riding-school.

Every day, without exception, he rode for a certain time which was measured by a fixed number of hours. If the weather was bad he rode in the covered track which he had had built for himself on his own lines.

I marvelled at his patience in taking an untrained horse on the lunge and teaching him his paces by unwearied effort. His favourite idea was to found a stud. Everything connected with horses interested him more than the management of his estate, as to which, if the truth be told, he was completely indifferent.

His six-year-old daughter, Marit, loved horses as much as he did. She spent her whole life in the stables and crawled fearlessly between the horses' legs or lay in the stalls on the straw. It was her greatest pleasure to be allowed by her father to ride. She knew all the horses quite well and could tell you from a great distance whether her father was riding Queen Mary or Golden Boy, or another of his favourite animals.

Christmas came. . . . In a strange country and amongst strange people I found this festival somewhat melancholy, although our hosts did their kindly best to alleviate our unhappy position. I missed my home and my family.

Often the thought of what it must look like at home made me very unhappy. But I forced myself to overcome these moods. I had come to make life pleasant for my husband and to help him, and not to make his stay there more unhappy by my melancholy reflections.

So I must needs bring out the mask which I had so often worn in life. It was my duty outwardly to show what a cheerful creature I was.

Every day I came in smiling to lunch and took such a lively part in the conversation that no one, least of all my own husband, noticed how I really felt.

At breakfast we drank, according to the

Swedish custom, a sort of coffee, made of freshly roasted barley, which was delicious. Milk and water in jugs were also put on the table. Our midday meal at six o'clock was a sheer delight and on Christmas day a veritable banquet. But I always went on strike at the first course. It was then that a huge dish of dried cod appeared, the favourite national delicacy, which I never managed to appreciate. No house, whether palace or cottage, could dispense with it on Christmas Day. To please our host I took several pieces, but with the best will in the world I could scarcely get them down.

In compensation for the dried cod came delicious hot lobsters, which had been brought from the East Coast, where their flesh is particularly delicate and palatable. They were followed by a long dinner. It would take too long to describe all the courses. I was forced by my digestion to the reluctant conclusion that we poor Germans during the years of war and afterwards, had forgotten the meaning of good food. In any case, we have never been such avowed partizans of the delicacies of the kitchen as the Swedes—least of all myself. I had always appreciated a well-laid table, a bowl of flowers and a nicely arranged dish far more than the food itself.

Later we sat round a table and the distribution

of presents began. From this the servants could not be left out. Our hosts were greatly attached to old manners and customs and Christmas night was spent quite in the old style. The only thing lacking was a Christmas tree which I missed sorely.

Little Marit entered heart and soul into the distribution of the presents. Her face shone with excitement, her eyes sparkled and she followed everything that happened with breathless eagerness. The culminating point of her happiness was reached when the door opened and a huge white rocking-horse with a high saddle was wheeled in. Her dearest wish had been fulfilled. She sprang at once on the back of the horse and rocked madly to and fro, clasping tenderly to her breast the little doll which I had given her.

The fun was fast and furious and the excitement increased. I slipped away quietly as the general jollity depressed me and got on my nerves. I have passed more unhappy Christmases in my life, but have never found the festival more desolate and more depressing than the one I spent in Sweden.

Ludendorff, who had followed me, sat in silence at his writing-table. We were both of us deeply immersed in our thoughts and those thoughts were of our home.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WE had been some time in Hesselholm when we received an invitation to Stockholm. A Swedish captain whom I had got to know during the war at the house of Princess Antoinette Isenburg offered us his house in the event of our preferring the town to our life in the country. At the same time he put at our disposal his housekeeper and his servants. He himself would be away during our stay, in order not to intrude upon our privacy. He enclosed photographs of his beautiful villa with its wonderful furniture.

In spite of this friendly invitation we preferred to remain in our solitude. It was the right thing for Ludendorff. He had the spacious park which merged in the forest and rendered it possible for him to take long walks abroad without encountering a human being.

During these times he collected and co-ordinated his ideas with a view to putting them on paper later on. He was working, as I have already said, at his war memories. He took his way with vigorous step, sunk in earnest thought.

His lips moved constantly as he ceaselessly murmured words and sentences to himself in an undertone.

In the beginning of February the Swedish newspapers gave us bad news from Germany. There had been outbreaks of shooting in Berlin and in other towns. In addition we heard how cases of robbery were terribly on the increase in the country. From day to day the situation was getting worse and no one knew how to control the growing disorder.

I could not bear to think that my own circumstances were secure, while my children were at the mercy of danger and want. Come what might, I wished to be with them. I could not endure the thought that while I sat down to dainty dishes and good roast meat, they had to live on horrible synthetic foods. Moreover, I knew that Ludendorff was well looked after and in pleasant surroundings. Work would be his best companion, so I hoped that he would not find my departure too painful. While I was still staying at the country house an incident occurred.

Although we lived a quiet and secluded life our presence in the neighbourhood had not been concealed, and one day a great procession of manifestants appeared in Hesselholm. The Swedish Social Democrats under their great

leader, Branting, had grown into a powerful party and the demonstration was organized by them. It was a manifestation of the idea of world-brotherhood in which the Social Democrats of every country felt (or believed they felt) themselves to be united.

The leaders of the demonstration came to the house as delegates and demanded with vigour that our host should give notice to Ludendorff to leave the place as there was no room for him on Swedish soil. Otherwise they would burn his house over his head.

It was only due to his cleverness and tact that the incident did not end in disaster. It might have been very different, as Hessleholm is in an isolated position and it takes at least half an hour to reach the next village. We found ourselves in a dangerous situation.

Our host struck the right note when he informed the delegates that he could not be asked to drive from his threshold a man like Ludendorff. In Sweden it had always been customary to respect the laws of hospitality and to do so accorded with the tradition of his family. As long as the General remained on his land and beneath his roof he was secure. That was so, and must remain so, and now they could do what they thought best.

This speech achieved its purpose. After a lengthy discussion the demonstrators departed in good humour.

This incident made our host anxious about our safety, and when some days later he had to leave there appeared, apparently on a peaceful visit, an officer of the Hussars with his servant. From their saddlebags, however, peeped out the yellow cases of their revolvers, betraying the real purpose of their visit. None the less, everything continued peaceful and no use was made of their weapons.

When our host returned I pressed energetically for my departure. I wished to return to Germany. The rumour of the great conflicts which were to be expected in March turned the scale. I wrote to Herr von Giese, our military attaché in Stockholm, and requested a passport for my return journey. In a few days it was in my possession.

The Swedish captain who had offered us his house in Stockholm learnt, through our Legation, of my intended departure. He volunteered to act as my escort and came to Hesselholm to fetch me at the end of February.

CHAPTER XXIX

MY return was not less adventurous and remarkable than had been my outward journey.

Before we separated Ludendorff and I paced up and down for a long time in front of the house—we did not speak much—we were both moved.

To say farewell has always touched me deeply. I have found often enough that a fleeting farewell has been the prelude to a separation for all time.

The very weather seemed in sympathy with my departure, overnight there had been a heavy fall of snow. A leaden sky hung low over the landscape, which seemed burdened with a heavy sense of depression, as though the sun would never shine again.

The sleigh stood at the door and the horses stamped their impatient feet on the snow. Our host insisted on seeing my escort and myself as far as Malmö. We climbed hastily in. A last good-bye—a wave of the hand and Hesselholm vanished from my sight—the house where I had experienced so much sorrow and which had

none the less been a refuge to me. Only I had to try not to think—I suppressed my feelings and drew a deep breath. Another episode in my life was behind me.

Although we had lived a secluded life in the country, the rumour that I was passing through Malmö seemed to have got about. A room in the hotel was ready, where, to my surprise, I was welcomed by the loveliest flowers which had been sent by unknown hands and when I visited the German consul, where I had to have my passport “visaid,” he and his wife greeted me without any surprise at my presence.

I handed over my passport and asked for the visa. When the consul saw my large, unusual diplomatic passport, he shook his head doubtfully. “You cannot travel with that, your Excellency, it is impossible. I have been informed that the English know of your return.” It is quite possible that the train-ferry will be held up in the open sea and you yourself captured as a hostage. You must be well aware that the Entente have entered into negotiations for the surrender of the Kaiser, the Crown Prince and other German rulers as well as prominent army-leaders—in short, of all those persons who, in their opinion, are responsible for the World-War.”

That was a pleasant state of affairs. After long consideration we found the following solution. Thanks to the really good offices of the consul a new and quite ordinary passport was got ready for me in hot haste which I had to sign in a fashion almost illegible. We hoped that in this way I should get through without being recognized.

When I again saw my escort, the Swedish captain, in the hotel I told him of my difficulty. Instead of replying he put down a large heavy parcel on the table. When I asked what it was, he calmly replied: "Please take them, they are candles which you will find a good use for in Germany. I have just read in the newspaper that a general strike has broken out in your country. The telephones, the electric wires and the gas and water-mains are cut off."

Here was another pleasant surprise! Berlin without light or water. Now I understood that mysterious word "candles." The good fellow had procured me a large supply of candles for all emergencies. I was much touched by his forethought.

I had no more surprises that evening and next morning I went on board courageously, trusting in providence and leaving future developments to history.

Once more I found in the Swedish captain a simply perfect knight-errant. There was no act of kindness or consideration which he neglected in his care for my interests, and he saw that every obstacle in my path was removed.

We met at lunch in the dining-saloon of the comfortable modern Danish steamer. We sat at the window and gazed at the tossing sea amid the whirling snow flakes of the storm, which lashed the waves, and dashed the spindrift against the window. Far away on the horizon rose the English patrol boats above the sea, but I gravely doubt if they had really been sent out for my capture.

In any case, I sat in perfect calm at an excellent lunch on a Danish boat and kept the conversation going, while my thoughts sped forward to Germany and my children or turned sadly back to Hesselholm.

On landing in Sassnitz they went through the same dramatic performance as at Malmö. At the passport examination, the custom-house and the hotel—everywhere people knew of my arrival and I was stared at from every side. In the hotel I at once sent for a German newspaper, but I had only read a few lines when I laid it down in despair. If but half of what stood there in heavy

type was based on fact, then it looked as though the situation was desperate.

Stricken in mind and body I went early to bed, and contrary to my usual habit fell at once into a deep sleep. I was awakened in the middle of the night by wild cries under my window. It was a regular inferno. I took no more notice of it and succeeded in going to sleep again. Next morning on waking, I had a hazy recollection of the alarms of the night. Gradually the dim picture of my recollection became clear and the whole incident stood out distinct in my consciousness. I seemed to hear the actual individual words which had reached my ears from the general storm of execration.

My companion, who sat pale and sleepless with a look of real alarm at breakfast, admitted to me later that I was not mistaken. The words which later came back to my conscious memory showed that the noise had been intended for my address. It was useless to wonder who had given the hostile information of my whereabouts, or how the report that I was passing through, had so quickly got round. I could find no explanation and even to-day I do not know to whom I was indebted for my nocturnal "ovation" in Sassnitz. For a long time the captain refused to give me the details and only

when I told him that I had taken part in the drama did he give me the following information.

"Quite close," he said, "to Sassnitz is a fishing-village which is infected with communism. The inhabitants of this village having learnt of your arrival, came by night to the hotel to demand your surrender at the top of their voices. A reasonable reply had no success and only provoked contemptuous laughter. The hotel-keeper and myself, in anxiety for your fate, have stood guard at the door of your room the whole night long." So once again I was to be seized as a hostage. I am no coward, but to fall into the hands of Communists and to be spirited away did not appear an enticing prospect.

We breathed more freely when we had Sassnitz behind us, and came to Stralsund where the conditions were normal and fairly peaceful.

There I was forced to keep my bed for several days by a chill. Consequently I wrote a farewell letter to my companion, to whom I owed so much and besought him to start on his return journey with a clear conscience as I was now in safety.

As soon as possible I continued my journey. I found that, during the short weeks of my absence, the affairs of my country had become completely dislocated.

No matter where one looked or what one heard, all was terror and chaos, confusion and uncertainty on every side.

The greatest difficulty was to obtain food. Man became the slave of the mark and the poor folk had to stand for hours if they were to receive the meagre portion allotted to them. Often the shops, which had been sold out in a few moments were shut, and many of their waiting customers had to go away empty-handed despite their patience.

What was more natural than the growing trades of profiteer and smuggler which developed? Folk streamed in droves to the country and tried to buy everything the villages could provide.

It was on a Sunday that I began the next stage of my journey—God help me—unwittingly I had got into one of the “food-trains,” and even to-day I cannot forget the melancholy pictures I witnessed on this journey.

Laden with their knapsacks, staggering under the heavy burden of baskets and sacks of potatoes, there waited at every station crowds of men from every rank of life and every grade of society. For the most part, however, they were the poorest of the poor. I came into touch with people whom otherwise I should probably never have met. I heard their stories, their grievances

and struggles for their daily bread. My heart grew warm with sympathy for all this distress which one could do nothing to alleviate.

In Berlin I missed my son, who had come to meet me at the station, in the seething crowd. Stumbling over sacks of potatoes and luggage of every kind, squeezed and pushed by the crowd, I at length reached the barrier. Here the whole Berlin mob seemed to have gathered, and I had to swallow many vulgar and ugly remarks due merely to the fact that I was better dressed than they were and was wearing a fur coat. But I did not draw back, although I frankly admit that I found the period of waiting for the porter with my luggage extremely trying and unpleasant.

It was eleven o'clock at night and I thanked Heaven that I had got a sleigh. I drove westward in icy cold. But my night's misfortunes were not yet over. During the last few weeks the housing situation had become worse and I found nowhere to sleep.

In many of the hotels troops were billeted, while others had been handed over to the so-called "War Companies," who sold iron, leather or any other necessary goods for fabulous sums to the foreigner. So I stood, in great Berlin, and knew not where to spend the night.

Not even the smallest and most modest room was unoccupied.

In the meantime, it had grown very late and I hesitated to seek shelter in the middle of the night with friends or relations. But I could not remain in the street. Apart from the cold a great unrest prevailed in every quarter of the city, and I encountered many suspicious figures as I went through the streets. I was in despair and felt myself deserted by the whole world. Finally a hotel-porter took pity on me and rang up every Pension he knew and all people who let rooms in his neighbourhood. For long his efforts were in vain, but at long last a room was found for me in a kind of summer-house in the Kantstrasse and thither I went, escorted by the boots of the hotel.

A clean and friendly woman received me and led me to my room. It was so icy cold that I involuntarily recoiled. There was no coal or wood in the house and to heat it was impossible.

I did not know where I had got to and breathed more easily when the door had closed behind me. In bed I felt so sorry for myself that I began to weep bitterly.

Now, years afterwards, when almost everybody occupies his more or less comfortable home, all of it seems so simple. What I then endured was all I cared to endure. I felt that little else could

touch me. My strength was at an end. Next morning I summoned up fresh courage. My hardships lay behind me and I had reached my goal. I was again in Berlin.

As, however, I was not in the best of health, I went to a hospital where I was under the protection of the Mother Superior and the Franciscan nuns. However, the chief thing was that I was again near my children.

CHAPTER XXX

A VERY unpleasant time began for the people of Berlin. Night after night, far and near we caught the rattle of the machine-guns. In every quarter of the town, including the West, shots were fired. They came from the roofs, from the gratings of the basements and from every conceivable hiding-place. One was never sure of one's life if one left home. There was street fighting almost every day and there were countless killed and wounded on both sides, alike among the Spartacists and the Government troops. Feeling became even more bitter and the end was not in sight.

The Spartacists had conceived of the scheme by which women and children were put in the front line so that the soldiers would be afraid to shoot. It often happened that by these manœuvres, which had been reduced to a system, innocent persons ran the risk of being shot or severely injured in hand-to-hand conflicts.

In many districts, particularly in the North and East, numerous shops were stormed and plundered—in particular those which sold food,

clothes and boots. The struggles for the possession of the buildings of the Berlin Lokalanzeiger are well known : it was occupied by the extreme radical faction and defended with the greatest bitterness. The Red Guards had regularly entrenched themselves there, and it was only after a long siege that the Government troops were able to take and clear the network of buildings.

General strikes were the order of the day. Key industries were frequently enough occupied by the Spartacists and destroyed. People willing to work or emergency volunteers were hounded out or forcibly forbidden access.

In order to meet this reign of terror, whole battalions were formed for emergency work of a technical character : they consisted of engineers, officers and students and offered armed resistance to the violent acts of the strikers. None the less, we were often enough without water or light. The candles of the Swedish captain, at which I had laughed, came in very useful. With every wretched little stump of candle one had to be very economical. Waste was its own sharp punishment, for there were no substitutes.

The worst days were those in which the traffic on the Underground and the electric tramways was interrupted. This was felt most keenly by the professional classes who had to go long

distances daily on foot between their homes and their work. It was in Lichtenberg, near Berlin, that the most serious collisions occurred between soldiers and Spartacists.

My son had volunteered for the police division of the Cavalry Guards which was stationed at Lichtenburg. For a long time I heard nothing from him. There were neither newspapers, posts nor telephones ; one was dependent entirely on the news which passed by word of mouth.

Every conceivable rumour was abroad, and before they reached us they had been alarmingly exaggerated. Again I had to pass through days of great anxiety as I was tortured by uncertainty as to my son's fate. I had lost two of my boys at the Front, was I now to lose the last of them ? —in street fighting in a civil war of German against German ?

Days had passed when suddenly Heinz appeared. I thanked God for preserving him unharmed.

He had suspected my grave anxiety, but in spite of all his efforts, had not been successful in sending me news. I shared the lot of many a mother who must have trembled for the lives of her children. How many a mother must even have searched for the names of her son or sons in the lists of the killed or seriously wounded ? Many who had gone through the whole of the

World-War uninjured were during this period lamed for life.

The day of the funeral of the Spartacists who fell in these conflicts was proclaimed a day of national mourning. At the house of some friends I watched the funeral procession in Unter den Linden. It lasted nearly three hours. At its head went the bands and the heavy notes of the funeral marches alternated with the workmen's "Marseillaise." Societies and delegates of the Social Democrats, Communists and Spartacists passed by, with red flags and banners which in large letters displayed the inscriptions, "Up with the world-revolution ! Down with Capitalism ! No more war !" or "We are the young guard of the proletariat." This last banner was followed by a crowd of half-grown boys and girls who, despite their youth, made a formidable impression. Carriage after carriage followed in a long chain—Ebert, Scheidemann, Haase, Barth—all the power and authority of the revolution was in the procession.

The first hearse rolled slowly by. The catafalques were set on huge trestles, covered with blood-red clothes. On these rested the coffins.

Eight draught horses were attached to each carriage. The number of the dead who had been

the victims of the class-war and had fallen in civil strife, was large.

Hundreds of wreaths were borne past us, in dense masses of red flowers, decked with long red streamers. Many of the wreaths were so enormous that they had to be carried by four men with a stretcher, who bore a tribute of flowers for the victims.

What quantities of food could have been purchased for the poor and the sick in return for the money which, in this time of sore need, was wasted on these exaggerated funeral ceremonies !

How many small and hungry mouths could have been filled.

There seemed no end to the procession of mourners on foot. Closely surrounded by their body-guard of sailors walked Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, followed by countless Russian prisoners who had been released.

Men said that it was solely due to the intelligent influence of Ebert that the excited masses gradually calmed down. The force of the second great storm seemed broken, and public tranquillity slowly returned.

The police division of the Cavalry Guards was disbanded, and my son joined mounted Regiment No. 15 which was composed of five former cavalry

regiments, and was garrisoned at Paderborn. The regiment had often to restore order and in so doing was involved in difficult situations.

When the battles in the district of the Ruhr broke out, he was immediately sent there. But on first reaching the station of Unna in Westphalia, they were surrounded on leaving the train by Spartacists in such superior numbers that officers and men had to surrender without resistance. The officers were interned in the cellars of the Town Hall. A few days later the leader of the Spartacists appeared, a former sailor who had been condemned to death for mutiny in 1917, but had been reprieved. The officers were led forth and drawn up in a long line. The sailor walked straight up to Heinz and asked him: "You're Ludendorff's son, aren't you?" When he replied in the affirmative the sailor continued: "You are free—you can go."

My son told me later that he had believed his last hour had struck and that they were going to put him against the wall. Thank God, I only heard about all this later.

The 15th Mounted Regiment was also present at the downfall of the Soviet Republic in Munich and marched there as the first Prussian regiment from Giesing. The liberators were greeted with

rejoicing and the inhabitants put at their disposal all that remained of their provisions. Ham, sausage, wine, brandy, everything was gladly given. The gratitude of the Muncheners at their release from cruelty and oppression knew no bounds. Unfortunately they came too late to prevent the horrible murder of the hostages in the Luitpold school.

Count Bothmer, the Army Commander, was held in it as a captive. On the evening before the shooting of the hostages, a young fellow entered the room where he was confined and bade the Count follow him with all speed. With the words, "And now hurry up, Count," his rescuer led him outside into the street and accompanied him a little of his way. Before taking his leave the Count asked his preserver who he was and on what grounds he had been singled out for freedom. The young man said hastily, "That's no business of yours, Count, good evening," and disappeared into the night.

Next day the town was full of the murder of the hostages and all hearts were heavy. It was then for the first time that Count Bothmer realized the fate which he had escaped, but he never found out who had saved his life.

His daughter told me that she had several times visited her father during his imprisonment.

She had to wait for hours before she could see him. During this period her estimate of the blessings of communism, which she had to form from the arrogant but highly remarkable men who had occupied the Luitpold school, must have been a little biased.

CHAPTER XXXI

AFTER Ludendorff's return from Sweden we lived in the Hotel Adlon in Berlin, which the Entente had pitched on for their Headquarters. Officers of all nations swarmed round us. The khaki uniforms of the English and Americans mingled with the paper-bag-blue of the French.

Herr Adlon, the owner of the hotel, had the tact to give us a room with a separate exit on to the Wilhelmstrasse. By this means we avoided contact with the officers of the Entente and in all the months I was there we never encountered them.

In other respects also life was made as pleasant for us as possible, which was no easy matter at that time when almost every day brought new surprises in the political or economic world. None the less, we found it hard to have no house of our own and to be compelled to live the lives of nomads. Captain von Treuenfeld, who had been a member of the staff of the Supreme Command and knew how much we longed for a house of our own, offered us a flat in the Victoriastrasse

which belonged to his mother-in-law. In his kind way he tried to make it clear to us how pleased his mother-in-law and he himself would be if we accepted his offer. She had, in any case, intended to move to one of her country houses near Hamburg and would feel considerably relieved by knowing that her house, with its many works of art, was being looked after. He himself found the thought that we were compelled to live a roving life in hotels intolerable and would be frankly delighted to be able to provide us with a home.

So much for the captain. When we had made the acquaintance of his mother-in-law and she had confirmed his offer in a warm and friendly manner, we moved, after some reflection, to the Victoriastrasse.

The flat with a view of the Tiegarten, situated in the loveliest quarter of Berlin, was spacious and magnificently furnished. It was like a small private museum and contained treasures of inestimable value. Pictures by Cézanne, Manet, van Gogh, Degas and Lieberman were among them and the rooms were decorated with a tasteful arrangement of artistic masterpieces of every kind. In our new home an exceedingly busy life began which had its culminating point and conclusion in the Kapp revolt. In the beginning,

Ludendorff was surrounded by a small circle, but the number of his clientele increased from day to day, and finally it was like the consulting-room of a fashionable physician. People streamed there from all parts of Germany, one visitor gave another an introduction to our house and they waited in patience, as our friends jokingly put it, until they were permitted to attend his "consultation."

There were conferences in all the rooms, and all those who later took part in the Kapp revolt were in and out of our house. General von Lüttwitz, General von Oven, Colonel Bauer, Captain Pabst and many others. Even the adventurer Trebitsch Lincoln was not lacking and Kapp himself came often, so that I got to know him. He was a man with an insinuating personality, highly gifted as an orator, so that people listened eagerly to his clever speeches. And yet how pitifully he failed !

Naturally I put two and two together and realized that all these men came to our house for definite reasons—on behalf of some national movement. I did not know what was the real object of their visits. In my presence, and I very seldom took part in their gatherings, only commonplace subjects were discussed.

People spoke of the Communists and of the

Government of the day. Ebert, Scheidemann, Haase, Barth, Dittman were names which were often mentioned. I never realized that a *coup d'état* was being broached and was still far from dreaming of such a thing at that time.

I asked no further questions, because Ludendorff had not once, but often, told me not to meddle in his political affairs, in order not to hamper his freedom of movement. It would destroy his peace of mind if he felt that I bore an accomplice's share of the responsibility.

I did not find it easy to obey his wishes and to stand aside. I did so because I did not desire from selfish motives to put difficulties in his way.

In the last weeks before the revolt, women instead of men sought for long and earnest conferences with Ludendorff. I was hurt by his giving other women his confidence and initiating them into his affairs, whilst I was excluded.

I spoke about this to Ludendorff but he gave me a soothing reply and again made his position clear to me.

I was not to be allowed to know anything of what was going on, because what was planned and contemplated was a dangerous game. Things might go wrong and then, come what might, I

could stand with a clear conscience, before any court of law and swear that I had had no part in the political intrigues which went on at my house.

These reasons were convincing and plausible and my husband's attitude appeared to me both chivalrous and devoted. I was completely satisfied and for the future I fell in with all his demands. With the approach of the time fixed for their enterprise a still greater caution was exercised and in any case it was necessary, as we were spied on from all sides.

For instance, one day a young officer appeared, pale and, apparently, destitute and starving, who told a touching story of how during the Baltic conflicts he had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks and with difficulty escaped. He was lavishly entertained and, since his store of ready money was exhausted and reduced to twenty pfennigs, Ludendorff discreetly slipped a hundred mark note into his pocket when he departed. The story of the young officer was so sad that when he had left us it was long before I could regain my tranquillity.

A few days later a secret report reached Ludendorff that the whole thing was a fraud. The young man was not an officer, but a spy, whose duty it was to gain information of what was

going on at our house and to bring back anything said by Ludendorff.

Not only did the speeches of Kapp make a deep impression on me, but I was much interested in the utterances of Captain Pabst. In the presence of the most exalted persons, he spoke with force and enthusiasm of how the discreditable state of affairs in Germany could and must be altered.

After speeches like these one could not help feeling that he was a marvellous man, and that if a man was needed he would be the one "to deliver the goods," but like Kapp himself he was a dazzling failure. Their fine words had no counterpart in their deeds. Later when I realized the true state of things, I never understood how it was that Ludendorff was the only person to be snared by the alluring eloquence of these men, without demanding guarantees for the success of their great enterprise.

It is inconceivable that a man like him, with his scientific outlook and solidity, should have taken part in an affair which was deficient in any and every detail of organization.

When the Kapp conspirators had fled to the four winds, they left behind them an office which was conducted with almost criminal carelessness and entirely devoid of system. Even the salaries

had not been paid to the employés, so that when Ludendorff had left Berlin, they applied to me with representations which in any event would have been distinctly disagreeable.

Ludendorff never possessed any knowledge of human nature, otherwise he could never have been at the mercy of those influences which brought about his downfall. Even quite dubious elements did not hesitate to approach him.

I have already mentioned Trebitsch Lincoln, whose name was already mentioned in accents which had a rather unpleasant sound. He was of Hungarian origin and during the war acted as a spy against England. That was his qualification for an undertaking of such importance to the weal or woe of our own country.

The course of the revolt is well known. I need only add a few details.

When Ehrhardt's brigade entered Berlin our house was intoxicated with hopes of victory. We were all in a mood of the greatest enthusiasm and in those first three days people were so convinced of the success of the national movement that Ebert preferred to leave Berlin with his ministers.

As, however, the third day drew to its close, one could already detect low murmurs of doubt and alarm. During the night difficulties super-

vened which from hour to hour grew more acute. The fourth day ended in harsh discordancy.

Kapp resigned from the Government. Everywhere one could see nothing but defective organization and incompetent leadership.

At the office of the Reichschancellor, generals were ready to fight each other and stood with revolvers in their hands. Captain Pabst, who had once painted us such wonderful pictures of the future, had departed on the second day and been careful to put the frontier behind him. Our hopes and illusions were shattered and nothing remained but a bitter after-taste of disappointment and disgust.

Even before Ludendorff left Berlin we were already in grave difficulties and our lives were threatened. Captain Ehrhardt placed at our disposal a body-guard of four-and-twenty men, splendid fellows, devoted body and soul to their leader. They protected us faithfully and it was imperatively necessary, since the excitement of the populace knew no bounds and all their rage and all their hate was concentrated on Ludendorff. His friends saw to it that he escaped from this danger, and provided him with a refuge in a Bavarian castle, with a splendid situation and a fine view over the valley of the Inn. Some weeks later he changed his quarters from motives of

prudence and became the guest of Baron von Halkett in Stefanskirchen, near Rosenheim, and here for a time he remained.

Several weeks later Captain von Pflugk-Hartung, one of Ludendorff's most devoted adherents, was a victim of this revolt. The Spartacists recognized him with unerring instinct as their bitter enemy and planned his destruction. It was some time before their plans succeeded. While the Captain was attending a conference in Schöneberg, a whole bundle of hand grenades was placed beneath his car which stood at the door. He got into it without suspecting anything. When he started, the hand grenades exploded and the car was overturned and burst into flames. Captain von Pflugk-Hartung was blown to atoms. His was a great loss, he was an enthusiastic patriot.

There is one less gloomy story which I must tell amidst the record of these anxious days. Among Ludendorff's regular visitors was a distinguished looking lady in deep mourning. She came every day on a political errand on behalf of a Doctor Lange who was alleged to be living in the Hotel Bristol. She was visibly affected by the unexpected departure of Ludendorff and requested an interview with me.

She told me that it was urgently necessary for

Doctor Lange to know Ludendorff's whereabouts in order to keep in touch with him. On the same day she produced a bulky envelope and extracted from me a promise to forward it to him by the quickest and safest route. She often came afterwards with the same request which I conscientiously acceded to. This went on until one day this furtive business was explained in a highly remarkable manner. The correspondence had not the remotest connection with politics, but consisted, to cut a long story short, of love-letters to Ludendorff. The lady had employed me, his lawful wife, as the post-mistress for her intrigue. I know that love makes people resourceful, but I still think that the whole business revealed her as fundamentally lacking in any sense of decency.

CHAPTER XXXII

ABOUT a year after the revolution Princess Isenburg gave a great dinner in honour of the Swedish captain who had fetched me from Hesselholm and escorted me to Stralsund. We were present and the Countess Kleinmichel had also been invited about whom both in her own country of Russia and in ours, hair-raising stories were told. People had often warned me against her, and in particular Ludendorff had done so.

The poor Countess had turned so many heads that the people had quite fantastic ideas about her.

From her early youth she had been in the closest relations with the reigning family of Russia. As, moreover, she was connected by ties of blood and friendship with the noblest families of the whole continent, no sooner was the revolution over, than she was suspected of being a traitress, a spy, and God knows what besides.

My own view is that she was simply a loyal Russian who loved her country and, apart from that, merely a clever and likeable woman.

Immediately after mobilization she had turned

her princely palace into a hospital on the grand scale, in which she acted as a nurse. Later she was kept there as a prisoner by the Bolsheviks and completely shut off from the outside world. At the beginning of her martyrdom she was assigned a guard of forty sailors and a few weeks after, thirty Red Guards from the Volhynia Regiment, notorious for their roughness and cruelty, were added. Among the sailors, as she told me herself, there were some who gave the impression of good-natured, harmless folk, and behaved themselves respectably. The Countess often had long talks with one of the young sailors, in which she discovered that he had been under her nephew, a lieutenant in the Russian battle-fleet. The sailor spoke in glowing terms of him : " Yes, there was a fine officer for you." " And yet you murdered him ? " was her puzzled question, to which he naïvely replied : " Orders are orders. Those whom we could not stand, those whom we hated, because they spurned under foot our dignity as human beings, those are the people whom we not only killed, but slit their noses as well."

Another time she asked him whether he really knew the objects of Bolshevism. He replied with pride : " The world power of the Bolsheviks, but first Germany must be compelled to conclude a peace without annexations or indemnities."

Finally she asked him whether a guard of seventy men was really necessary to keep her and her servants in check, seeing that she was a woman, and seventy-two years of age. "We know that quite well," was his answer, "but we also know that you are a frightfully dangerous woman who signalled from the roof of your house to the Emperor William and betrayed the position at the Front." "At that," the Countess told me, "I could do nothing but hold my peace. If people really believed utter nonsense of that sort, how could I convince the fellow that I had only once met the Emperor William in my life, and then in all innocence. It was at a shooting-party in Silesia at the house of Prince Henkel-Donnersmark, and I happened to have been invited by my friend, the Countess. In the evening, after dinner, we sat round the fire and chatted and those were my only relations with the German Emperor."

After much suffering, bereft of her property, the Countess succeeded in leaving Russia and escaping to Germany, but there also she was met with mistrust and watched.

I was sorry for the Countess. She was certainly neither a traitress nor a spy, but merely the victim of that malicious gossip which was at all times common form in Russia and caused so much misery.

I say this although, next to Germany, my preference is for Russia, since I have on my father's side a drop of Russian blood in my veins. I am familiar with Russian music. I read and like the Russian authors and I am very interested in Russian painting and sculpture, particularly in that of the young modern Russians in whose work there is something strong and vivid.

I saw a good deal of the Baltic exiles at the house of the old and blind Baroness von Osten-Sacken. For these poor creatures the Baroness symbolized a fragment of their lost home country.

After the taking of Mitau, I met Count Hahn at her house. He told me how the Bolsheviks had behaved to the Baltic nobility and of the bestial reign of terror initiated by the Red Army. The Baltic barons all felt themselves marked out for destruction. Then at the last, how the Germans came on the scene as their preservers. People thanked them on their knees when the prison doors were opened.

In Baden-Baden I made friends with Frau von Aveyden, whose husband had been military attaché in Stockholm right up to the war. From that period dated her warm friendship with the Queen of Sweden. She told me a great deal about her. By means of the Swedish Red Cross, the Queen had got into touch with the Siberian

camps for prisoners of war and sent them many kindly gifts.

Hedwig Aveyden also devoted herself to the good cause, and it was due to her tireless efforts and her connections that many German officers who were held prisoners in Siberia, obtained news of their relations after having yearned for many months for a sign of life from their home. Through my friend, Frau von Zitzewitz, I heard much of the German Embassy in Rome. Her husband, who was a colonel, had been military attaché there before the war, and she herself was the only German-speaking woman at the Embassy. Frau von Hindenburg was an English woman and Frau von Flotow a Russian.

According to one story, at the official dinners of Frau von Flotow, a waiter, in Russian national costume, stood behind every guest. These, however, were not waiters at all, but spies employed to listen and report on the conversation of the guests. I take it for granted that the spies of Frau von Flotow were as complete an invention as the stories of Countess Kleinmichel who, at the age of seventy, was supposed to have stood on the roof of her house, etc.

At the house of Prince Guidotto Donnersmark, when on a visit to his summer home at Egern, I met the dowager Princess. The Poles made life



I N I

GENERAL IUDINDORFI

A drawing from life made in 1916 by Professor Arnold Busch.

so intolerable for the great Silesian landlords that they could not live on their estates. In the park of the Donnersmarks they had set up machine-guns and former submarine sailors of our navy, still in their old uniforms, carried out their duties under the supervision of a former Prussian officer. I myself saw the photographs which the princess handed round.

During our migration from Berlin to Munich we stayed a fortnight in Augsburg with the Fuggers on the Wellenburg. One day, a procession of fanatical enthusiasts appeared. It was composed of quite young boys who, with cheers and shouts of welcome, gave Ludendorff an ovation. We went into the courtyard and Ludendorff gave them an equally enthusiastic reply. At its conclusion he passed along the line of his admirers and shook each of them by the hand.

Next day an article appeared in the Press of the Left, in which the glad news was given that Ludendorff had become honorary president of the "Mutual admiration society" which had been founded the day before.

On our journey to Augsburg we had an interesting meeting with the Bishop of Riga and Mitau. Twice during the Bolshevik regime he had been removed from his office and put under arrest. On his return journey, he was our

first guest in our new home at Munich. In those days Ludendorff had not begun his attacks on Catholics and Jesuits, this idea being one of his later developments.

The former Burgomaster of Munich, von Borscht, told me interesting stories of the Prince Regent and the Emperor. The Prince Regent used to attend the October cattle-show. He sat on a platform and distributed the prizes to those peasants whose animals had won them. Behind him stood the neighbouring gentry and near him Borscht with his golden chain of office, as father of the city.

The peasant who won the first prize advanced to the Regent and received his medal. He was, however, so overcome by delight and agitation at the thought of his distinction that he felt in his pocket and pressed five marks into the hands of the Regent and three into those of Borscht.

The Kaiser came to Munich to lay the foundation stone of the German museum. Borscht welcomed him and proffered him a huge silver chalice filled to the brim with strong wine from the Rhine. The Kaiser gave a toast in which he announced with ringing words that he drained the beaker to its last drops to the welfare of the town of Munich.

The word had been spoken, but the deed must

have caused the Kaiser great discomfort. When it was done he simply had to sleep off its effects and give up a ceremony which he was to have attended. He even excused himself from the public banquet and arrived there an hour late.

We saw many interesting men in our new home at Ludwigshöhe, near Munich. This was chiefly before the Hitler revolt. Afterwards fewer, far far fewer, came to see us.

The hostile feeling against Ludendorff was then for a time so strong that a guard was even posted at our door. By night our garden on the street side was guarded by sentries with loaded rifles, two at each corner, and the same number were posted on the other side of the house, on which a balcony was situated.

In this connection the following incident occurred. At that time we had a great many people staying in the house, and our talks and discussions had continued far into the night. Finally all of us, including myself, were in bed. Suddenly there was the sound of a shot—two shots—silence—then more shots—a regular battue. Well, things are getting really lively, I thought. Clearly they are going to raid us. In the house everybody was astir. The strangest apparitions crept from their rooms like moles from a molehill. I can still see them—Ludendorff in his

nightshirt without shoes or stockings. My son-in-law in breeches with one puttee and on the other leg a gaping void between his boot and his trouser-leg. My son was already dressed, but collarless, an eye-glass in his eye and a pair of binoculars in his hand. My daughter was in her morning clothes with her child in her arms. I laughed until the tears came to my eyes and my merriment was received with general disapproval : how could I behave with such levity in so serious a situation ?

And what was it that had really happened ?

Two dark-haired goats had climbed on to the balcony in the pitchy blackness of the night. The alert sentries heard the noise, suspected the presence of the wicked enemy and shouted : " Halt, who goes there ? Dead silence—not a sound was audible. When everything had calmed down—there was a fresh noise. The goats had climbed up a little further. There was another challenge by the sentries—no answer—and the noise of the shooting began.

Next morning it was found that a dog which had been chained up in a neighbouring villa had been shot. In his terror and alarm he had broken loose and rushed to his own destruction. He was the only bag achieved by their rapid fire against an imaginary enemy.

CHAPTER XXXIII

INOW come to the Hitler revolt. For some months our house had become the rallying-point, one could almost have called it the political centre, of the National Socialists. It was like the continual coming and going in a pigeon loft. Not merely every day, but every hour there were conferences.

In order to avoid all suspicion, Ludendorff, with masterly acuteness, made a point of busying himself in the garden before the eyes of everybody. He pruned the roses, watered the flowers and sprayed the lawns, as though he were the most harmless fellow in the world, remote from any thought of political upheavals.

At that time I did not yet know Hitler, and had only heard on every side that he possessed a power of speech capable of sweeping men off their feet and bringing them almost by force beneath his spell. Whenever he spoke, all Munich streamed to hear him, and the multitude of his admirers grew from day to day. People who came to tea with me in those days talked of nothing but Hitler. He was the focus of universal interest.

General von Lossow, the Commandant of the Military College, told me that one evening he happened to enter a café where a number of men, fresh from a meeting of Hitler's, had collected. At every table the liveliest discussions broke out, which almost without exception developed into enthusiastic encomiums of Hitler. This had interested him so much that he had decided to attend the next meeting, in order to form his own conclusions.

He had gone with General von Kress to the Crown Circus, and felt compelled to admit that he had been most deeply impressed. He now, he said, understood Hitler's power of charm. The latter had spoken with such whole-hearted patriotism and depth of conviction that his only regret was that his junior officers could not hear such a speech. Unfortunately that was an impossibility.

What the other discussions were about which went on in our house I do not know. I was only able to notice that the stone had been thrown into the water and formed ever larger and larger rings. I took no part, any more than I had done in the Kapp revolt. Everything was very mysterious, and I did not even know the names of many of the people who were continually hurrying in and out of our house. It was some years later that

I learnt that a man with whom I frequently exchanged a friendly good-day was Captain Ehrhardt. I did not press Ludendorff for information. It was beneath my dignity to ask about matters which were not freely confided to me.

My instinct, however, told me that the kettle was simmering vigorously. But, I thought, it has often simmered before and even boiled over and when the steam was let off, nothing happened. Much crying and little wool !

As I had often been through it all in the course of the years, I did not intend to let it depress me now. People could get drunk with their own words and the next moment . . . why, the next moment they would behave quite differently. I need say very little about the Hitler revolt. Enough has been written about it already. Of what went on before, after and during the revolt, I only wish to relate what happened at our house on the anniversary of the republic, when Dr. von Kahr made his inaugural address at the Bürgerbräu.

Until the afternoon everything was normal. Towards evening, I saw our servant, Kurt Neubaur, hurrying out of the house in uniform. I was surprised and called after him : " Kurt, where are you off to in such a hurry and in uniform, too ? " Without stopping, he turned

round : " A meeting in the Bürgerbraü . . . detailed to guard the hall. I must catch the train," and he was gone.

Half an hour later, shortly before the departure of the next train, I heard the clink of his spurs as my son Heinz went bounding downstairs. He also was going to the meeting. The only surprising thing was that, contrary to his habit, he was wearing uniform. I wondered at that.

Ludendorff was in his study. I heard him pacing restlessly up and down, instead of sitting, as usual, at work at his writing-table. About nine that evening he came into my room and said : " I have to go into the town. I shall shortly be fetched by a car. My presence is required at a national assembly."

Soon after this a motor dashed up at a tearing speed and stopped in front of the house. The horn sounded. Ludendorff left the house and stepped inside and the next moment it had gone. It had all happened as though in a dream and events had marched with such speed that I had not even recognized my son at the steering-wheel of the car. It was long past midnight and neither my husband, my son nor our servant had returned. I waited until half-past three and then went to bed. Next morning I heard that none of the three had come home.

Suddenly Lena, my faithful maid, dashed into the room and said, joyfully brandishing a newspaper: "Here we've got the solution of the riddle."

The leading article bore in heavy type the title "Adolf Hitler just proclaimed national dictator. General Ludendorff nominated Commander of the National Army." The article went on to describe the events of the evening before and of the night which followed.

I never doubted Hitler's success for a minute and was in a state of feverish excitement. Our telephone was attacked by storm. Countless numbers, known and unknown, rang up to know how things stood and in the belief that the enterprise would be successful, offered their help and co-operation.

I knew all too well the instability of the mob, but was myself so enthralled that I never for a second envisaged the possibility of failure. I trusted in their unity and with the agility of a trick portrait painter I drew rosy pictures of the future. I was in a waking dream.

From it I had a rude arousing. An official of the post office appeared. The matter was urgent, very urgent. No messenger had been available. Your Excellency was to be informed that. . . .

Alas ! my castle in the air that I had so lovingly built, lay in ruins on the ground. Wireless messages had been picked up. " Oath of allegiance and participation in the Hitler revolt extorted by force of arms. Hitler and Ludendorff to be arrested wherever discovered." I clung to the back of my chair to prevent myself falling to the ground. The blow had come too suddenly. I knew nothing of the whereabouts of Ludendorff and my son. I was consequently not in a position to pass on the news. Thoughts went whirling through my brain. It must be a mistake—a fatal mistake—an intrigue.

I wanted to go on hoping, to go on believing. I did not wish to throw up the sponge before it was time. But—— The first to arrive at midday was my son who sank exhausted into a chair.

In view of the decisive events which had taken place during the night, this did not strike me as surprising. I begged him to tell me all and mentioned the wireless message which had been picked up. Then he collapsed : it was no use any longer to try and keep up my hopes, he groaned in his despair.

Harassed and dead tired, he had reached home by a circuitous route and with considerable difficulty, as Government troops and bodies of

police had established cordons which no one was allowed to pass. What, however, my son did not tell me, but withheld, out of tenderness for my feelings, was the following. On the advice of Ludendorff a public procession was organized to test the feeling of the population and to find out whether it was in favour of Hitler and Ludendorff, or in other words, of the monarchy—or the reverse. As is well known, a collision had occurred at the Feldherrnhalle and resulted on both sides in quite a number of killed and wounded. Kurt, our servant, was dead, and Ludendorff also was reported to be among the fallen.

Sooner or later I had to hear of all this, but the manner in which I heard it was terrible. The telephone kept ringing unceasingly. Our maid-servants were stricken with panic. They already knew the rumour of Ludendorff's death, but did not trust themselves to impart it to me. Frightened to death they sat in their rooms and no one went to the telephone. So I went myself, which was for me, unusual.

In the meantime my son had gone to the other instrument and I heard him talking to General Hildebrandt. I caught the words: "Heinz, do you know that your father also has been killed?" To which Heinz replied: "Yes,

your Excellency. I have already heard it, but haven't had the courage to tell mother.

The receiver dropped from my hand. Just as I had heard of the death of my son Erich on the telephone, so again I was to get this news in the same pitiless and inexorable manner.

Suddenly the room was filled with people, who stared at me in alarm and asked me terrified questions. I said not a word to anyone. I sat and listened and the whole thing went on like a play, as though it was outside the zone of my consciousness.

It was not until an hour later that I got news from Ludendorff. The rumour of his death had been invented. Hitler and he were alive and only our poor Kurt had been left on the battlefield. Ludendorff also informed me that he was unable, for the present, to return home as his presence was required in the city.

He did not appear until the evening. It was due to his examination at the Central Police Station and before the Court, that he had been detained so long. His indignation knew no bounds.

In a few hours the Hitler revolt had been definitely suppressed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ALL those who had been in any way implicated in the Hitler revolt or were suspected of having taken part in its preliminaries, were arrested.

Ludendorff was the only exception.

After a formal statement had been taken from him, he was released and exposed to no further annoyance. On the other hand they felt compelled to arrest and detain my son Heinz, who had merely lent his father the assistance of a minor subordinate.

One morning at seven o'clock two members of the police appeared at our house. They explained that Heinz was only required in order that he might be examined and sign a deposition, but in other respects they behaved themselves as though they were arresting a dangerous criminal.

My son quickly dressed himself and followed them readily ; perhaps a doubt or two may have crossed his mind, but he went with complete confidence and entirely unsuspecting. At the police station he was made to wait for hours in a prison cell crawling with filth, in which criminals,

vagrants and, in short, all those whom the police allow to infest our streets, were detained prior to being brought before the magistrate.

The latter, in his examination, squeezed my son like a lemon without getting any answer which suited his book. He was even told that his finger-prints would be taken, as in the case of vulgar felons, a suggestion which he regarded as insulting and refused.

As I had heard nothing from him the whole day, I rang up the police in the afternoon, but received an evasive reply. In the evening on making fresh enquiries I was told that the lieutenant had been handed over for detention to the prison authorities of Neudeck.

My son in prison ! I took quite a time to realize the new situation. Then I thought that it was only a question of a few days until the situation had cleared up. It turned out otherwise, for Heinz was detained for nearly five months.

When I paid my first visit to the gaol my impressions were not exactly favourable.

Even to-day when I look back, I can see all the long corridors and those gratings—those endless gratings. A warder with a huge bundle of keys opened various gates and doors, only to shut them as I passed through.

It had a depressing effect on me : suddenly I felt as though I could no longer breathe. As a particular favour I was allowed to see my son in the office of the Chief Warder, but we were strictly forbidden to exchange a word without the presence of witnesses. Either the Chief Warder himself or a subordinate was always present.

During this period Frau Mary Heilmann-Stuck, the daughter of the famous painter, showed herself a true friend in need. We used to go twice a week to Neudeck and took my boy fruit, books, cigarettes and sweets, dainties which his heart desired. He was also visited by many of his friends who did all they could to relieve his plight. When Christmas came he got so many presents that he jokingly remarked : " I'm so comfortable here that next time I really shall start a revolution."

Instead of the stupid walks in the prison yard, he used to clear away the snow to give himself exercise, although this task was rejected by the others, particularly men of high rank, as being beneath their dignity. The result was that their bodies lost their elasticity. The physical exercise did my son a great deal of good and it was far better for him than to be always brooding. His companions in misfortune have assured me that

he was always in good spirits and kept up their own by his humorous point of view. On his release, Heinz encountered two old acquaintances, who had just been committed to prison, in the corridor of the gaol. Those were active stimulating days.

In the house of one of these, a former officer of the Death's Head Hussars, an unexpected search had been made at Danzig. Heaven knows of what he was suspected, but in any case, material which was considered incriminating was found.

The other one, a wild young lieutenant, would have done a good deal of "time" if he had been caught. He was young and adventurous and never lacking in any enterprise which required men of spirit.

He it was who duly collected a band of storm troops and endeavoured to penetrate the portion of the Four Seasons' Hotel, occupied by the diplomats of the Entente with a view to their arrest! He did not, thank Heaven! succeed, but Ludendorff had to apply to the Italian Ambassador, whom he had known in the past, and beg him to intervene. The latter, a kind-hearted marquis, showed that he understood the hot-headed folly of youth and the whole thing was hushed up.

After the revolt it was long before any trace of the lieutenant could be found. From dawn to dusk our house was beset by secret police and everyone who came in or out was watched, but the fugitive succeeded in slipping through to us unobserved.

Another young malefactor was four or five times in prison for his political activities. Among other things he tried to make Ebert the victim of his humour, and made all Munich laugh ; I had the story from the lips of the evil-doer himself.

He had come from Baden, naturally, by a pure accident at the very moment when Ebert's special train reached Munich. When, however, he saw Ebert slip from the train with all the airs of a ruling prince, he could not restrain himself. Hastily unpacking his bathing-drawers, he tied them to his stick, and wildly waved this banner, with its strange device, in the breeze.

The authorities failed to appreciate this somewhat singular welcome. The lieutenant was arrested and brought before the examining magistrate who, when he caught sight of him, exclaimed with a sigh : " Good God ! you again."

When the lieutenant told me the story, his blue eyes beamed at me and at its conclusion he added in deepest contrition : " I never really want to

behave like this, but something always comes over me."

During the Hitler revolt an amazing incident occurred. As a precautionary measure several members of the Government of the day, whose attitude was uncertain, were arrested and put under lock and key. They were taken to the villa of a publisher in the Isartal. The chauffeur, who had a weakness for practical jokes, whispered to them that their last hour was come, as they were all to be strung up in the wood. The captives were quite taken in and it was not until they learnt that someone had presumed to play a practical joke on them, that they breathed more freely.

They were requested to make themselves comfortable in the villa and if during the night they required relaxation to take and read the books on the shelves. Next morning when the revolt had been suppressed, they left the house.

In the afternoon one of them reappeared in the villa and, looking rather put out, declared that, by an oversight, he had left in a book which he had been reading, a letter which he had used to keep his place. The title of the book was *The River*, or something of that sort. A search was made which for long proved unavailing and finally the book-marker was found in *The*

Stream, by Max Halbe. It was an envelope with a bulky packet of hundred pound notes.

The fortunate owner had, as a precautionary measure, unburdened himself of these and then forgot them in his excitement. Naturally he did not wish to leave the money to shift for itself. . . .

This sort of thing occurs when statesmen deal in foreign currency without permission !

CHAPTER XXXV

THE period which elapsed between the revolt and the judicial proceedings was for Ludendorff a time of fevered activity.

Many people, acquaintances and strangers came to see him and he attached importance to every story they told or any comment they made—all parts of a mosaic, as he used to call it.

Often he talked for hours, his standpoint being at this time that much, very much, could be achieved by verbal propaganda.

He was unwearied in his collection of material wherewith to embarrass his opponents to clear himself and establish his innocence. The volume of his correspondence grew, particularly with his counsel at Göttingen who had joined with a Munich advocate in undertaking his defence.

The General wrote so much that a mass of documents accumulated. Moreover, Munich was split into two factions, one for, the other against, Ludendorff. His opponents attacked him with vigour. Both in the Kapp and Hitler revolts his conduct had been governed by his sleepless criminal ambition, and the damage which he had

done to national interests by his vanity and selfishness would take years to repair.

In other respects the organization of the movement had been just as "marvellous" as had formerly been the case in Berlin. For instance, members of the neighbouring group at Pasing had sat in peaceful contemplation of their beer-jugs, quite unaware of the fact that at that very moment an attempt was being made to overturn the Government and set up a national dictatorship.

And even if a march against the "sinful Babylon" of Berlin had been undertaken and a collision with the Government troops beyond the Bavarian frontier had occurred, what then? The reply to such eventualities was simple. "Everything will soon come right." That was our only compensation for scarcity of information, and lack of unity! Everybody felt himself marked out as the leader and regenerator of our poor misguided people and suspected and intrigued against his neighbour.

I talked to General Hoffman about the Hitler revolt. He told me he had been six months in Munich for the purpose of using all his strength and all his influence to delay a movement whose approach he regarded with horror. In this, however, he had failed.

In his view the whole undertaking was premature and ill-timed. Fresh dissensions had been sown and the blood of our fellow-countrymen spilt quite recklessly and without obtaining the smallest advantage.

Hoffman, at that time, said one thing, which made a great impression on me. "Since I myself have had a part in making world history," he said, "I don't believe any longer in Cæsar and Hannibal."

This brings back to my mind an incident which occurred during the war. Hoffman was in Berlin on public business and paid me a visit. Sitting in my room, he gave orders by telephone to the Front and moved divisions and corps about like a conjurer juggling with indiarubber balls. I expressed my admiration and received this nonchalant reply: "If I could not see the soldiers on the march in my mind's eye, if I didn't know exactly which division must be put here and which there, if I could not visualize the whole thing in its physical proportions, why then I should be a damned bad Strategist."

Ludendorff felt peculiarly bitter against General von Seeckt for failing, on the first news of the rising in Munich, to mobilize the whole Reichswehr and advance with fire and sword against the traitors.

In this also one must recognize how mistaken Ludendorff was in his judgment of his fellows.

The mere idea that General von Seeckt, a man of intelligence and iron control, should take part in an enterprise which was built on the foundations of romance and doomed from the start to failure, was ridiculous. He was certainly the only man who could have organized and carried out a political revolution. The soldiers of the Reichswehr were devoted to him to a man, and he had the solid support of its officers.

In this connection I remember a remark made to me by a woman friend of mine, which was both amusing and appropriate to the circumstances. "General von Seeckt could certainly have brought off the revolt, but, thank Heaven! he wasn't fool enough to do so."

In the course of a few weeks the excitement in Munich had died down, but it flared up again when the trials were announced. The parties attacked one another with redoubled vigour. Seldom has a political trial lashed a crowd to such fury and torn it with such hate and discord as was then the case. People stormed the hearings, which took place in an improvised court of justice at the Military College. The junior officers had been removed from the tainted political atmosphere of Munich to the pure air of Dresden.

Every phase of the trial was followed with passion, and every word uttered by the Judge, the Prosecution or the Defence was discussed.

I myself never attended a single sitting of the court, although my photograph appeared in the illustrated papers. I was depicted as standing by Ludendorff when he was entering his car, but was actually not there at all.

This brings back to my memory, in lively fashion, a similar occurrence at the unveiling of the "Fron Hindenburg." A platform was erected in front of the statue and in the foreground was placed a seat of honour and on this throne I was expected to mount. Then, when I had hammered in my golden nail, a photograph was to be taken. I do not care for this sort of thing at all. Consequently I slipped hastily into the background but only in part succeeded in avoiding my fate. Later I found my name under the photograph of Princess Wedel.

For weeks before the trial, Ludendorff's counsel from Göttingen lived at our house and he continued there during the proceedings. The days were full of talk. To and fro surged the volume of words. Anything which could have any bearing in the case was scrutinized and discussed microscopically, even the criticisms in the papers and the good or bad effects which they might

produce. It appeared particularly important to win over the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* to our side.

Ludendorff's counsel accordingly decided to write to a man whom he knew, who was supposed to have some influence with the editorial staff of this paper, requesting him to exert his influence in favour of Ludendorff. The Editor's answer, the original of which was forwarded by his influential friend, was positively devastating. By accident, Ludendorff himself opened the letter which contained criticisms of his conduct which I prefer not to reproduce. He showed me the letter with a somewhat subdued demeanour.

The result of the Hitler trial is well known. All the prisoners were found guilty with the exception of Ludendorff, who was acquitted. For his part in the business my son, after being in prison for five months awaiting trial, was sentenced to a year's detention in a fortress. It is true that the execution of the sentence was suspended, but still. . . . In addition he had to pay a fine of a thousand marks and the costs of the trial. It was an expensive pastime. He was found guilty of being an accessory to an act of High Treason, by having driven the general's car.

In a moment Ludendorff again became the

popular hero, to whom the people's favour veered once more. He was overwhelmed with flowers and presents, and telegrams and letters of congratulation arrived from all parts of Germany, even from its remotest corners. Shortly afterwards when he celebrated his sixtieth birthday, this day was treated as a national festival of the first order: boy-scouts, companies of cadets, deputations, clubs and societies, all brought their congratulations.

In the evening a torchlight procession, with thousands of participants, came to greet him. At its head marched in full dress the leaders of all the Munich Corps and they were followed by the patriotic societies, with bands playing. It was an imposing spectacle.

CHAPTER XXXVI

I FEEL that I ought to add a word or two about our faithful servant, Kurt Neubauer. He had been with us for two years when the Hitler revolt intervened and he paid for his patriotism with his life.

I have had a chance of seeing him in all situations, in hours of sun and shadow, and I always found in him the same loyal sense of duty.

He came of a respectable family and went to the war as a volunteer. Later he joined the Rossback volunteers and had an almost sentimental worship for his leader.

He fought as a true patriot in all those battles in which his corps distinguished itself.

Before the Hitler revolt I often noticed a certain unrest in him ; he was devoted, body and soul, to the cause. Ludendorff sent him back home before the fateful procession of demonstrators set out, but noticed with horror that he was at his rear when the collision at the Feldherrnhalle occurred.

I do not know whether Kurt had a foreboding that he would be killed, but it is a fact that after

his death a farewell letter to his sister was found in his room. The letter was printed at the time and distributed in countless leaflets. It contains but one earnest request to his sister, to bring up her son in the spirit of German loyalty and inculcate in him a love for his Fatherland.

Kurt Neubauer was buried in Munich. He was borne to his grave by members of the Rossbach Young Men's Association, which he had founded in Ludwigshöhe, amidst a huge attendance from all the patriotic associations.

When the first anniversary of his death came round I found his grave bedecked with a mass of flowers. Kurt Neubauer will not be forgotten.

And now for a happier page in his life's story. Owing to our inadequate preparations in the garden and the pigsty, our table had sometimes a rather unhappy appearance. Meat dishes in particular were scanty. It was then that Kurt had a brilliant idea: "How would it be, your Excellencies, if we were to fatten a pig? A pig always pays for itself! We could easily keep a youngster in the hut at the back of the garden and I'll soon fatten him to such a point that you can feast once more on ham and bacon." The little pig was there in no time. Its official name was "Rosalind," although there is no denying that "she" was a boar. Rosalind was as friendly

as a puppy and so uncommonly clean that the words "Pfui you Swine" lost all application. But she possessed one vice—a great longing for freedom, due, no doubt, to her still greater love of good cheer. . . . She soon grasped how to cross the frontier of her realm and invade the mangolds. Oh the troubles we endured for her sake, for as soon as our dogs scented her a boar hunt in the truest sense of the word, began. Right through the garden it swept over flowers and roses and newly-sown turf, until the fur fairly flew.

Ludendorff stood gazing at this drama in despair ; he kept rubbing his chin with the palm of his hand. How could the animal grow fat and plump with all this hunting ? One could see by his distressed demeanour that, like a good paterfamilias, he was counting up how many grammes of bacon must be set on the wrong side of Rosalind's balance sheet as a result of the boar hunt. Despite all these dangers the pig flourished and grew fat and round. Kurt's one anxiety was that some day Rosalind would be stolen. He pondered and pondered until the glorious idea occurred to him of guarding the entrance to the hut with a craftily set hand-grenade. It was a real artistic triumph.

I could not dispel a certain uneasiness and

found myself starting at every loud noise. How easily an accident could happen ! Kurt himself was the person most in danger. But I knew so well his dreamy nature. He was always dreaming of the liberation of his country. Often he would let his work go and think and think. He kept drumming and humming the "March into Paris." In times of disturbance Kurt used to put on his old service uniform, shoulder his rifle, and patrol our garden. I think he was sorry that no assailant appeared, even when, at the time of Rathenau's death, we were so seriously menaced.

Thus it was that Rosalind reached her lawful end and was transferred into ham, bacon and sausage as Kurt Neubauer had so prettily prophesied.

CHAPTER XXXVII

AFTER the Hitler revolt differences broke out between the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and Ludendorff which developed into a public quarrel.

The General asserted that the Crown Prince had received Doctor von Kahr in the night of November 9th, and that a conference with Cardinal Faulhaber had also taken place.

It was after this and because of this that Kahr had wavered in his support of the revolt and its failure could be attributed to that cause.

The Crown Prince Rupprecht denied these assertions of Ludendorff, which were very strongly made, and gave the correct version, namely that on the night in question he was not in the city at all, but at one of his castles outside Munich. It was only when the wireless messages had been picked up that he first heard of these terrible events, and the revolt had by that time been suppressed.

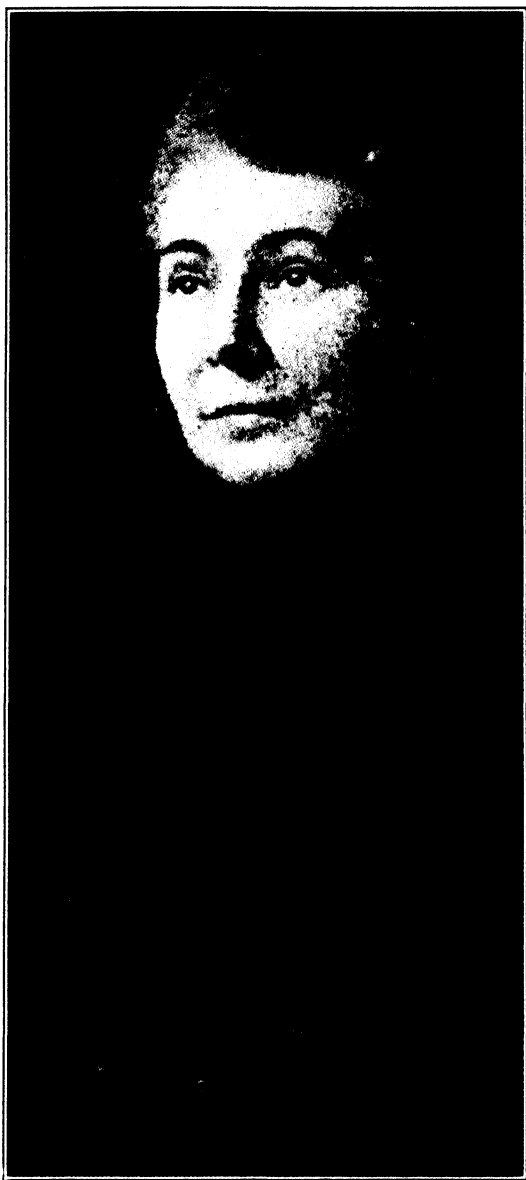
The Crown Prince demanded that Ludendorff should acknowledge his mistake and beg his pardon. This Ludendorff refused in disgust to do and held to his previous assertions. Had

Ludendorff been able to get the better of his obstinacy and make the desired amends, the Crown Prince would certainly have done all he could to avoid bringing their controversy before the eyes of the public. Such a solution of their quarrel was, however, little in keeping with the character of Ludendorff.

I cannot clearly remember whether Ludendorff realized that his insulting accusation against the Crown Prince had been made as a result of erroneous information, but in any case, instead of letting the matter rest where it was, he followed up one attack by another.

I followed this dispute with silent horror, since apart from every other consideration, it seemed exceedingly unwise. I felt that it was bound to end in disaster. Ludendorff's most faithful and disinterested friend, General Hildebrandt, endeavoured to act as an intermediary between him and the Crown Prince and in the interest of the good cause underwent a good deal of unpleasantness into the bargain, but the influence of evil sycophantic friends on Ludendorff was and remained too strong for him. The edifice which the indescribable efforts of General Hildrebrandt constructed one day was demolished on the next by his faithless friends.

The result was that Ludendorff would not give way and things ended in the unedifying



E.N.A.

FRAU MARGARETHE LUDENDORFF

trial which terminated, as had been anticipated, in a victory for the Crown Prince. The consequences were appalling.

The well-known public manifesto appeared, signed by thirty-seven generals, which excluded Ludendorff from their society. It was thereby made clear to him that people wished to have nothing further to do with him. To my regret the Army Commander, Count Bothmer, for whose wife I had a warm admiration, was also among the signatories.

The officers' associations naturally supported the Crown Prince on whose side right lay. Ludendorff flew into a furious passion. He blusteringly demanded that the officers' associations should take his part, which they flatly refused to do. Most of the officers' associations, among them the greatest, the German Officers' League, were thereupon violently attacked by the General.

In addition he composed a pamphlet : " King Rupprecht against Ludendorff," which was composed of vigorous propaganda in his own interests. In hundreds of copies it was distributed, given away, and hawked round at his expense. One day he showed me in triumph a passage in the pamphlet exclaiming : " That's got him."

I read the passage and looked at him with alarm. " But you ought not to write like that,"

I said, "it does not correspond with the facts and you don't even believe it yourself. You know that as well as I do?"

I usually held my peace, as in such cases, any contradiction was liable to make him lose his temper completely, and any objections I put forward only served to defeat my object.

For all that happened in the following years I have only one explanation, namely that his ill-success and the blows which fate had struck him had turned his brain. I found his conduct and actions impossible to explain.

His former adherents and admirers noted with sorrow how, with his own hand, he undermined their good opinion of him and his well-earned reputation. This he did by his grumbling and his incomprehensible obstinacy. Even those who did not of their own will avoid our house, were rudely driven away. Only a small body of his adherents held firm and they failed to influence him for the best. Instead, they merely spurred him to fresh efforts and embroiled him in further unedifying controversies.

In earlier days when he was attacked, he used to say: "If they were not afraid of me, they wouldn't attack me. It is a good sign." But now he had reached a point when no one troubled to attack General Ludendorff.

It was the last note of the song. . . .

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WHEN Hitler was released from the prison at Landsberg, his health was not good and many of his friends and followers were seriously alarmed about him. Contrary to his habits he was silent and reserved and appeared to have quite lost his enthusiasm.

On every side evil tongues set in motion discreditable rumours that he had changed his politics and allowed himself to be bought by the Jesuits and the like. When I first saw him again he exclaimed: "Now I know what mistakes I made and how it was that I came to grief. I have had to pay dearly for the lesson. Never mind, Mussolini did not succeed until his fifth try."

At that time little or nothing was heard of him since both in Bavaria, and, I believe, in all Germany, he was forbidden to make speeches. They thus wrested from his hands his most dangerous weapon—his popular oratory.

Among his acquaintances Hitler's spirits soon rose again and he dominated the conversation as he had been wont to do. In his presence it was

not easy for mortal man to get a hearing. In this respect he must excuse me, if he reminds me of an officer whom I knew, with whom I would in no other way desire to compare him. The officer had just the same habit of not allowing others to get a word in edgeways.

He used to go on talking loudly and vigorously and got thereby a rather unkind nickname. In the officers' club, people decided to put a stop to this flow of words, and hatched a spiteful little plot.

With an air of innocence they sat down as usual to dinner and allowed the officer in question to utter a few sentences in peace : suddenly a long drawn-out shrill whistle from a steam siren was heard.

The effect was devastating. The chatterer hesitated and lost the thread of his narrative. The interval was employed by his comrades in starting a sparkling conversation which took him unawares and prevented him from resuming his speech. In his surprise he was completely disconcerted and his flood of speech was damned up.

After Ebert's death a contest broke out for the post of President of the Republic. The German National Party canvassed far and near for Doctor Jarres, the former Burgomaster of Duisberg, and his triumph seemed assured, since from the other

party the Socialist, Minister Braun, was by far his most formidable competitor and even he was not considered a serious rival.

It was then that Hitler visited us one evening and had a long talk with Ludendorff. Towards midnight, when he had gone, the General came to me and my daughter in our room and said : " I have just had an anxious discussion with Hitler as to what we can do to prevent the election of Dr. Jarres. Something must be done, we are quite clear about that, and we have come to the conclusion that I should stand as the candidate of the National Socialists. Hitler is convinced that the risk must be run. Even if we do not succeed in obtaining sufficient votes, our policy will in any case split the vote and at least prevent the election of Jarres.

My daughter and I were simply horrified. It was a terrible idea.

When we had recovered from our first shock we united in beseeching Ludendorff to listen to us this once at least and abandon this extravagant enterprise. I even went so far as to ask why Hitler did not stand himself if he thought it necessary that the National Socialists should have a candidate of their own. Why was not he ready himself to make this sacrifice.

Ludendorff thought for a moment and then

replied : " Hitler knows perfectly well that although he has a great following in Bavaria he can count on very few votes in North Germany and East of Berlin. On the other hand the name of Ludendorff is well known and respected in the whole Empire. In particular the East Prussians and Silesians have been bound to me by gratitude and devotion ever since the war." I held my peace in the certainty that any further remonstrance on my part would be in vain. I knew that Ludendorff had made up his mind—the expression of inward satisfaction which his countenance betrayed, made that clear.

And what was the result? The policy of splitting the vote succeeded—neither Dr. Jarres nor Braun, the minister, were elected, but Ludendorff himself obtained so few votes as to amount to a public disgrace. Both in East Prussia and Silesia the result of the voting was amazingly unfavourable to him.

Once again the General had pulled other people's chestnuts out of the fire and received a slap in the face for his pains. As I had anticipated, the indignation of the people and the parties was directed, not against Hitler or the National Socialists, but against Ludendorff. He was publicly stigmatized as a disappointed man who tried to make trouble all round.

A number of leaders of the North German People's Block—von Graefe, Wulle, Ramin, and Count Reventlow did not approve of Ludendorff's action and even refused to vote for him. The General was enraged at the fellow-members of his party who had treacherously attacked him in the rear. The policy of splitting the vote had succeeded so well that it caused a complete breach between Hitler's National Socialists in Bavaria and the North German People's Block.

Destructive influences had already succeeded in bringing the names of Count Reventlow and his wife into hatred and suspicion, and I believe I am not far wrong in supposing that it was the same forces who later drove a wedge between Hitler and Ludendorff. The latter felt himself impelled, without any visible reason, to publish in the Press the statement that all relations between Hitler and himself had been sundered.

The result was a fresh conflict, this time between Hitler and Ludendorff, which tore the People's Party in the Reichstag into hopeless factions.

As no decisive result had been obtained in the Presidential election, a fresh election had to take place. This time the parties supported Hindenburg almost unanimously.

The destiny of Germany was cheerfully entrusted to his hands with the same love and

veneration and the same confidence which had been shown in the war. Just as he had been faithful to us in the war to the very end, so it was felt that he would now guide us through all the difficulties of our political embroglio.

It is remarkable evidence of the simplicity and piety of the Field-Marshal that in his time, when he had examined every battle plan submitted to him by the Supreme Army Command, he used to sign with the words : " Well, the rest is God's business." It fits in with his humble God-fearing mentality.

So much for Hindenburg. Another picture comes back before my eyes of the last days before the Armistice. Princess Fugger, who was then a countess, when taking leave of Ludendorff begged and entreated him, come what might, not to resign his command. With his foot already on the stairs, he turned round once more, and said : " Countess, I will not desert the sinking ship."

It was soon afterwards that he begged the Kaiser to let him resign ! He often used to say afterwards : " I ought never to have let myself be dismissed. It would have been better if, while the war was still in progress, I had snatched the Dictatorship for myself."

Every year Hindenburg used to come to us from Dietramzell. His visits were always days of

rejoicing in which all our neighbours in Ludwigshöhe took part. Even Knut, my little grandson, was delighted. When the time came round he would run to his little brother's cradle and shout, "Jürgen, Jürgen, the Field-Marshal is coming to-day. Aren't you pleased?"

I can still see the children of Mary Heilmann-Stuck standing in our garden with a mass of flowers. With eyes big with excitement they stood still so long gazing at Hindenburg that their bouquets grew too heavy for them and they shouldered them like guns.

The arrival of the Field-Marshal was ardently awaited. Along the whole road flowers were thrown into his car so that only his head projected from the green mountain of blossom. A storm of cheers met him as he stepped out and he had a kind word, a nod or a friendly smile for all.

It is impossible to give any idea of the pleasure his presence gave us and he was always ready with the same good-nature to put his signature at the foot of those cards and photographs which were pushed in front of him, or, as he called it, to write a few words "in the real German spirit." Afterwards he would turn to me with a smile and say: "Now I've written so much that my store is exhausted." The following letter is an instance of Hindenburg's simplicity.

" General Headquarters,

" *September 1st, 1917.*

" MOST GRACIOUS LADY,

" I beg that your Excellency will not consider it presumptuous of me to send you my photograph. I know no other way of expressing my gratitude for all that you have done for our brave troops.

" In deepest admiration I kiss the hand of your Excellency.

" Sincerely yours,

" VON HINDENBURG."

Once he told me a pretty story of what had happened to him in East Prussia.

On the main road his car was held up by an elderly lady in a state of great excitement, who begged him as a favour to lay his hands in blessing on the head of her granddaughter and her husband, who had just left the church after their marriage. Not until he did so would their union be properly sanctified.

A year afterwards, when the Field-Marshal was in the neighbourhood, he inquired how things had gone with the two young people. He was somewhat disconcerted to learn that they had already been divorced. He added with a laugh : " I certainly won't solemnize any more marriages, if my blessing is only operative for one year."

When Hindenburg was at Dietramzell in the summer of 1925 he again said he would pay us a visit. All preparations were made, but an express letter arrived which gave us the unexpected and very disappointing news that he could not come.

The Field-Marshal was no longer a private person able to do and say what he liked. He was President of the Empire and had to take account of public opinion both at home and abroad and to pay attention to the wishes and scruples of his Chancellor and Cabinet.

The Chancellor of that date, Dr. Luther, had at the last moment protested against Hindenburg's visit to Ludendorff at Ludwigshöhe and demanded its cancellation on political grounds.

Ludendorff foamed with rage : he felt himself deeply wounded. I had seldom seen him in such a state. He had always insisted : " Come what may, in the eyes of the world Hindenburg and I must always stand together and be and remain the pattern of German loyalty and German unity."

Now that ideal, too, was shattered.

Ludendorff replied at the time to the letter of the President somewhat in the following strain. He hoped, he wrote, that the time was not far off when Hindenburg would again be able to visit,

without embarrassment, the house of his old comrade-in-arms.

Only a small circle were immediately aware of the breach between them.

The anniversary of Tannenberg came round and with it the dedication of the great war memorial, and then it became clear to all how matters stood between them. Ludendorff publicly refused to stand side by side with Hindenburg, and made his own appearance dependent on this condition. It was like a blow from a club, well-aimed and delivered with full force—brutal and with consequences which were duly taken into account.

In concluding my memoirs I should like to add a phrase which was always on the lips of Ludendorff. If people gave him advice or warned him he used to say : “ I shall go my own way.”

Where that way would lead him he neither saw nor dreamed.

THE END

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